

A SHORT HISTORY OF INDIAN CULTURE

BY

V. N. HARI RAO, M.A., Ph.D.

Lecturer in History, University College, Tirupathi

WITH A FOREWORD BY

PROF. K. A. NILAKANTA SASTRI, M.A.

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P R E F A C E

This brief History of Indian Culture has been written in accordance with the syllabus of the three year B. Sc. Degree Course of the Madras University for one of its Minor subjects, viz., *History of Indian Culture*. For writing this book the author has relied upon *The Wonder that was India* by Basham, the *Legacy of India*, ed. by Garret, *The Art and Architecture of India and the Far East* by Benjamin Rowland, *Indian Philosophy* by Radhakrishnan and the first four volumes under the series *A History and Culture of the Indian People* published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. While too many details have been excluded for the sake of brevity, adequate data have been given to stimulate the interest of the general reader as well as the student in the wide subject of Indian Culture. Ancient India rightly occupies a predominant place in the treatment of the subject for in spite of the superimposition of the Muslim and western civilizations in the modern period, Indian Culture today is still rooted in the distant past and in the opinion of the writer a clear recognition of this fact in the present context is important from more points of view than one. The effects of the Muslim and British contacts have been briefly dealt with and for this purpose standard text books on Indian History have been consulted. A map showing the cultural sites of ancient India is included besides a few illustrations.

I am grateful to Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri for his appreciative Foreword to this book.

Tirupati, }
1—12—'59. }

V. N. HARI RAO

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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FOREWORD

I have much pleasure in acceding to the request of Dr. V. N. Hari Rao to write a Foreword to this *Short History of Indian Culture*. As he explains in his Preface the book is meant to meet the needs of the B.Sc. Degree Course of the University of Madras in one of its Minor subjects. I have read through the book and I can say that not only does it cover the syllabus very competently, but bears evidence of the scholarship of Dr. Rao, and his experience as a teacher of recognized standing in Indian historical subjects which has endowed him with a remarkable capacity for clear and pointed exposition. I have no doubt that the book will be read with profit by many outside the ranks of pupils taking the B.Sc. Course of the Madras University.

Nilesvar, Madras. }
25-7-1960. }

K. A. NILAKANTA SASTRI.

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R. A. N. S. S. S. S.

15-7-1950

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A SHORT HISTORY OF INDIAN CULTURE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

SECTION I

History and Culture

The Greek word *historia* means 'search for knowledge' and *histor*, 'a learned man.' History, derived from this Greek root, meant originally an inquiry or investigation and not a narrative. Herodotus and Aristotle began to use this term to denote the details accumulated during a long process of inquiry or search for knowledge. In course of time the word was used to mean a record of public or political events. In its wider sense, however, history is a record of everything that changes or seems to change. Hence Freeman's definition of history as "past politics" is very inadequate. History enters into every phase of human activity, viz., political, economic, social, religious, literary, etc., all of which urge society along. We can speak of a history of government, a history of art, a history of physics, and a history of history. In the history of a country or a nation wars and doings of kings occupied a dominant place because in the past they affected the life of the common people more or less intimately. While epigraphical and numismatic sources, as also the ballads and chronicles of old, are replete with the names of kings and dynasties, sources which give us a glimpse of everyday life in the past are undoubtedly rare. This is particularly true of the history of India. In the Introduction to the second edition of his *Survey of Indian History* (1954) K. M. Panikkar has recorded the following :

“A distinguished Chinese scholar, Dr. Yu Ta-wei, once remarked to me that whenever he tried to read a book on Indian history he was constrained to give it up after a few pages as it looked to him less like a historical work than a telephone directory—an enumeration of names unconnected with each other. Though the criticism is no doubt exaggerated, it is undoubtedly true that text books of Indian history are generally written more from the point of view of dynasties and kings and they have but little to say about the growth of civilisation, the change in national attitudes, the development and decay of social organisations and religious beliefs and such other matters, which constitute the stuff and substance of national history.” Serious attempts are now being made to remove this defect and compile a history and culture of the Indian people and a few volumes have already been published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.*

Culture, often applied to a group of people, means the art of living. It refers to the intellectual development made or the physical and mental training received in the course of ages. It comprehends the whole life of man and deals with his organisation of government, society, religion, industry, literature, etc. “It is not an individual achievement but a social inheritance.” Strictly speaking culture does not imply refinement; we can speak of a primitive culture as well as an advanced culture. A culture of a group is seldom stagnant. It progresses or degenerates with or without contact with other cultures. The culture of ancient Hindu India was remarkable for its “humanity” and love of peace. “In no other early civilization were slaves so few in number, and in no other ancient lawbook are their rights so

* Five volumes have appeared in the series: *A History and Culture of the Indian People*.

well protected as in the *Arthasastra*. No other ancient law-giver proclaimed such noble ideals of fairplay in battle as did Manu. In all her history of warfare Hindu India has few tales to tell of cities put to the sword or of the massacre of non-combatants. The ghastly sadism of the kings of Assyria, who flayed their captives alive, is completely without parallel in ancient India. There was sporadic cruelty and oppression no doubt, but, in comparison with conditions in other early cultures, it was mild.* The mildness and "humanity" of the Hindu have continued to this day despite the aggressiveness of his Muslim conqueror and ruler and the reforming zeal of the British. There were, no doubt, periods when the Hindu civilization appeared to be stagnant or even decadent but these were always followed by periods of revival and new efforts.

SECTION II

The Discovery of Ancient India

Traditions of ancient Indian culture have been preserved in India through the ages almost without break. This is true of China too. In the case of Egypt, however, her ancient civilization was not only dead and buried but erased from the memories of Egyptians until it was discovered by modern archaeologists. "To this day legends known to the humblest Indian recall the names of shadowy chieftains, who lived nearly a thousand years before Christ, and the orthodox brahman in his daily worship repeats hymns composed even earlier." Though modern Indians knew their common cultural heritage certain aspects of their past history or literature had to be reconstructed or discovered for them by modern researchers and explorers, *e.g.*, the reconstruction of

* Basham : *The Wonder that was India* p, 9.

the history of Vijayanagar, the discovery of the Indus civilization and the *Arthashastra*, etc. But to the modern Europeans many of whom believed and still believe that India is a land of "lethargic gloom" and "life-negating ascetics," the re-writing of the ancient history of India by modern scholars is a revelation, a real discovery. The pioneering work in the discovery of ancient India was done by Europeans connected with the East India Company. As a result of their studies the world came to know the glory of India's past. Indological research may be briefly studied under two heads (a) Sanskrit studies and (b) Archaeological and other kinds of exploration.

Sanskrit studies

Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones, Henry Colebrooke and H. H. Wilson were the first Indologists, who tried to interpret India's past to the western world by means of translations of Sanskrit works. These were Englishmen who came to India in the service of the East India Company during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Wilkins was the first to learn Sanskrit and from him Jones learnt it. In 1785 Wilkins published an English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Two years later Jones published a translation of the *Hitopadesa*. Jones, who was a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta, during the governorship of Warren Hastings, had already founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784), which through its journal, *Asiatic Researches*, devoted itself to a study of the classical works in Sanskrit. He was himself its first president. His translations of Kalidasa's *Sakuntala*, Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* and Manu's law-book under the title *Institutes of Hindoo Law* appeared respectively in 1789, 1792 and 1794. The *Sakuntala* astonished the western world, which welcomed it as a masterpiece, and the English translation went into five

editions in twenty years. Jones identified Sandracottus of the Greek writers with Chandragupta Maurya and Pali-bothra with Pataliputra. Colebrooke began a scientific study of Sanskrit. H. H. Wilson, a noted member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, became the first Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford in 1832. From Oxford Sanskrit studies spread to other European universities. The Royal Asiatic Society was founded in London in 1823.

The French traveller Anquetil Duperron translated the *Upanishads* from Persian into a "queer jargon of Latin, Greek and Persian" (1801).^{*} Alexander Hamilton, a member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, became a prisoner in France during the Napoleonic War. He taught Sanskrit to his fellow prisoners and one of his pupils was the German scholar Friedrich Schlegel. When he returned to Germany Schlegel published a remarkable work *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians* (1808). "This sudden discovery of a vast literature, which had remained unknown for so many centuries to the western world, was the most important event of its kind since the rediscovery of the treasures of classical Greek literature at the Renaissance ... †" Through Schlegel Sanskrit poetry and philosophy greatly influenced the thought and writings of other German scholars, viz., Schopenhauer, Hartman, Kant, Schiller, and Heine. Britain's "greatest contributions to Sanskrit studies" were made by Max Muller (1823-1900) the great German Sanskritist, who was Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford. He edited the *Rig Veda* and published annotated translations of other classical works in a series, the *Sacred Books of the East*.

^{*} The *Upanishads* were translated into Persian from Sanskrit under the orders of Daro Shukoh, the eldest son of Akbar.

† *The Legacy of India*, Ed. by G. T. Garrat, p. 32.

Epigraphy and Archaeology

While the Hindus of the nineteenth century knew and recited the Vedas, they had no knowledge of the buried remains of Harrappa or Patna (Pataliputra), the ancient Brahmi script and the edicts of Asoka. From a study of the classical Sanskrit works the Asiatic Society of Bengal began to turn its attention early in the nineteenth century to the archaeological, epigraphical and numismatic finds, which were being continuously made and reported on by the East India Company's field officers, e.g., temples, caves, pillars with inscriptions, old coins, etc. James Prinsep, "by profession an official of the Mint in Calcutta, by character the most charming of men, by genius the founder of Indian archaeology," interpreted for the first time the ancient Brahmi script and began reading the inscriptions of Asoka (1837). This he did by the laborious process of working backwards from known scripts and finding out repetitions and parallels in letters and words. Prinsep's colleague and disciple was Alexander Cunningham, a junior officer of the Royal Engineers, who devoted all his spare time to a study of India's historical monuments. In 1862 he was appointed Archaeological Surveyor. Though he did not make any startling discoveries Cunningham laid the foundations of archaeological studies in India on a scientific basis by surveying many ancient buildings and reading and translating many inscriptions. The reports of his tours of exploration were published in 23 volumes. Lord Curzon, Viceroy (1899-1905), took a personal interest in exploration and reorganised and extended the Department of Archaeological Survey, which began to receive liberal grants. John Marshall, who was appointed Director-General of Archaeology in 1904 carried out excavations at the ancient sites of Mohenjo Daro, Harappa, Takshasila, Pataliputra, Nalanda and Nagarjunakonda, which threw a flood of light on the remote past of India.

Curzon realised the importance of the proper preservation of ancient monuments and framed suitable rules under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1904).

The work of the discovery of ancient India is by no means complete. Recent excavations have extended the Indus civilization to Gujerat. Old inscriptions, coins and palm-leaf manuscripts are still coming to light and are being scientifically studied by Indian scholars and experts ; "...to-day the European Indologist cannot hope to be more than the helper and friendly critic of the Indian."

CHAPTER 2

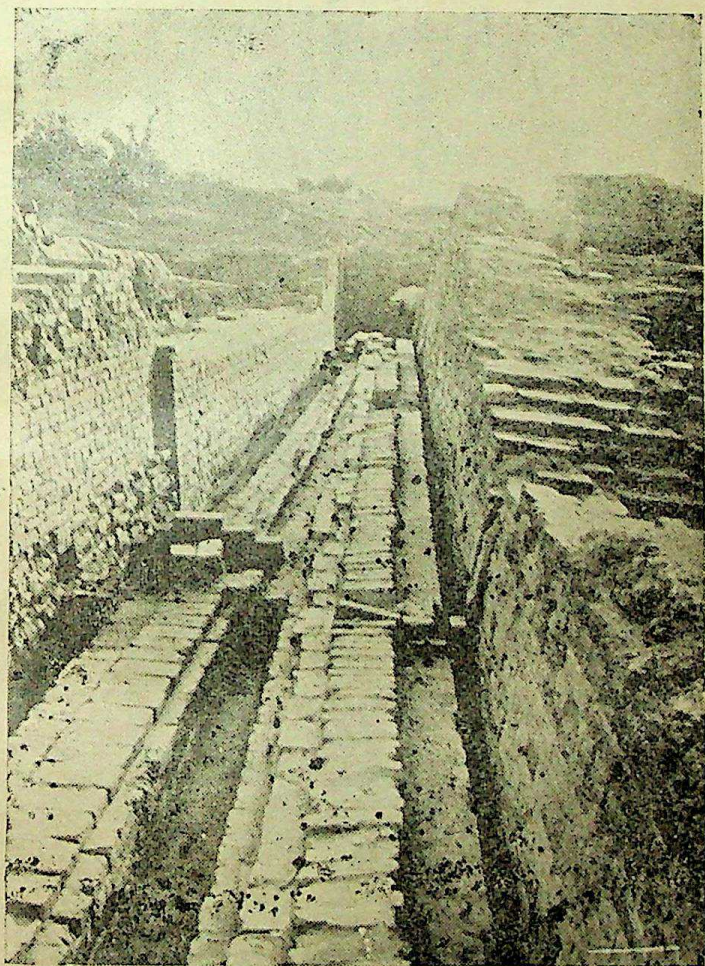
THE HARAPPA CULTURE AND ITS AFFILIATIONS

The Sites

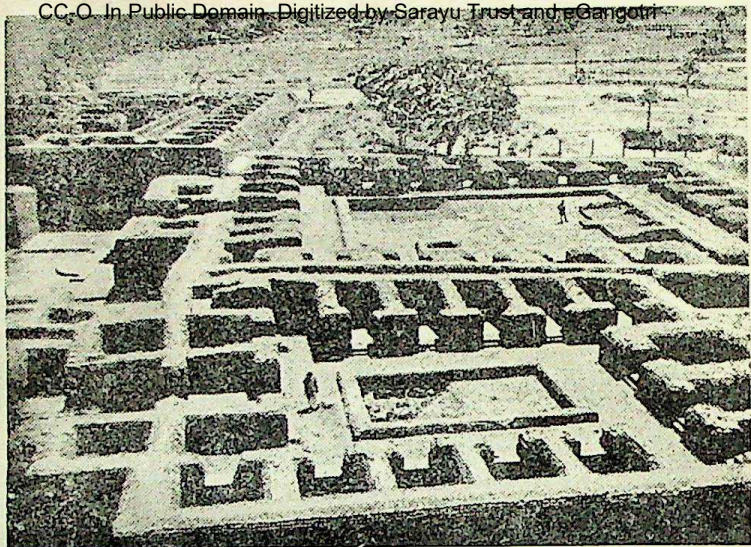
The Indus Valley Civilization, as the Harappa culture was first known, came to light in 1921-22 as a result of the exploratory work of two men, R. D. Banerji and D. R. Sahni of the Archaeological Department, at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa respectively. Sir John Marshall, Director General of Archaeology, undertook at those sites extensive excavations, which continued from 1924 to 1931, the date of his retirement. They had to be stopped during the Second World War but were continued by Sir Mortimer Wheeler during 1946-47. They revealed buried remains of private houses and huge buildings, streets and drains and a public bath, painted pottery, statuary, jewellery, earthen spindles, household vessels and tools, toys and a wide range of copper tablets and seals of steatite and ivory containing finely carved figures and writing. Mohenjo Daro or 'Mound of the Dead' lies in the Larkana district in Sind and Harappa in the Montgomery district in the West Punjab (Pakistan). Recent excavations undertaken by the Government of India, at Rupar in the Ambala district in East Punjab and at Rangpur and Lothal in Gujerat have extended the area of this culture both in the north and the south. Thus the excavations at these sites have thrown to light an advanced pre-Aryan civilization of about 3,000 B.C. extending over a thousand miles from the Arabian Sea to Lahore and Simla in the north and Gujerat in the south.

The Citadel and Town of Mohenjo Daro

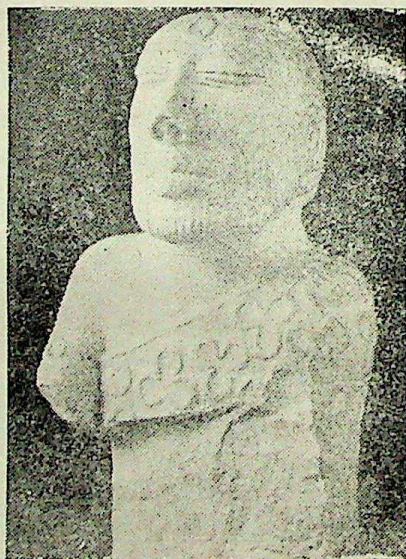
The excavations at Mohenjo Daro have revealed seven layers of buildings, one layer being erected over the site of



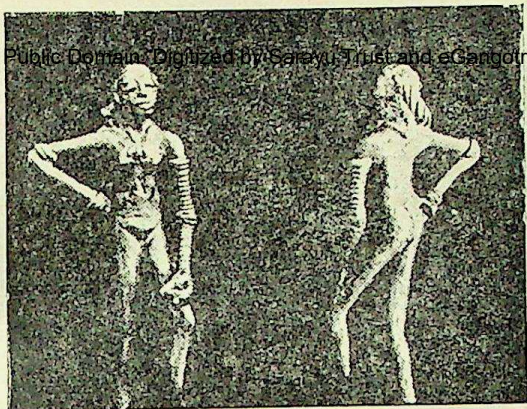
Mohenjo Daro. Excavated remains.
The covered drain.



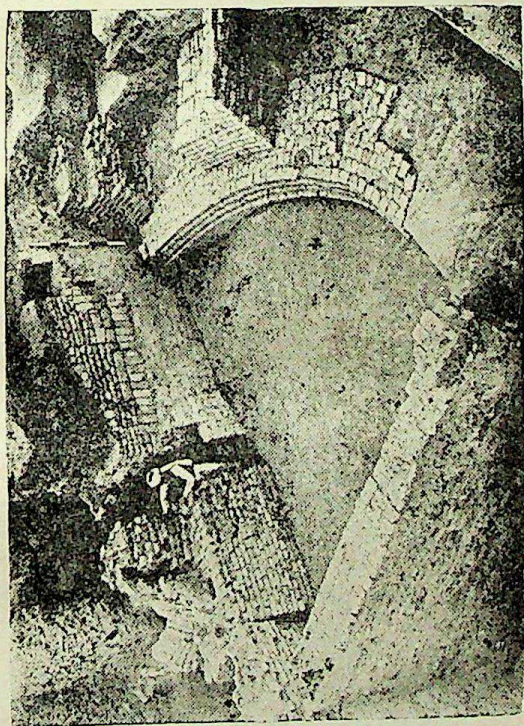
Mohenjo Daro. The citadel.



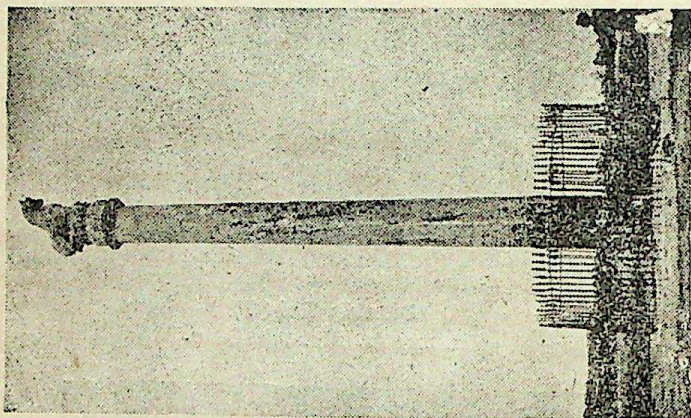
Terracotta,
Mohenjo-Daro.



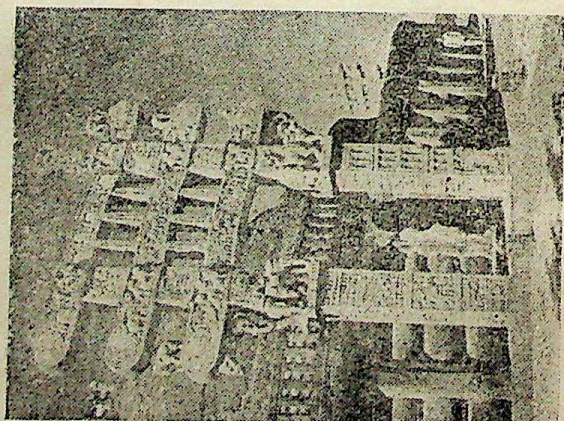
Dancing Girl (?)
Terracotta. Mohenjo-Daro.



Harappa. Excavated remains.
UP State Museum, Lucknow



Asoka Pillar



Eastern Torana
Stupa 1. Sanchi.

another as periodic floods of the Indus destroyed each site. Two more strata have also been discovered but work on these has been hampered by flooding. The remains leave an impression of a "centralised and disciplined citadel rule." The citadel stands on a platform, some 30' to 50' in height, and is in the shape of a rectangle 1,200' by 600'. It is surrounded by a massive wall of burnt bricks 40' wide and 35' high. The buildings inside the wall, *i.e.*, the buildings of the citadel, included several rooms, a pillared hall, a collegiate building and a public bath. The citadel probably contained all public buildings. In the pillared hall the ruling authority,—we have no information whether it was a monarchy or an oligarchy,—might have held its court. The rooms and the collegiate building were probably used for administrative purposes. The bath is a tank 38' by 23' by 8' with verandahs and rooms alround for the convenience of the bathers, and a huge drain to take out the water and have a refill whenever necessary. The material used was brick and was made water-tight with bitumen. The covered drain is so high that a man could walk erect through it.

The town lies below the citadel and reveals remarkable planning. The streets some of which are 33' wide are straight and cut each other at right angles and the main street is one mile long. The town is thus divided into blocks and in each block there are narrow meandering lanes. The houses in the lower layers are big and roomy while those in the upper strata are much smaller. The latter must have appeared in the course of centuries as the population increased. Burnt brick of standard size was the building material used. No stone house or building has been discovered. The size of the foundations and flights of steps show that houses often had two or three stories. Houses were built almost on a uniform pattern—a square courtyard with rooms on all sides. The bathrooms and kitchens had

covered drains, which flowed to the sewers under the main streets, which in their turn flowed to soak-pits. The street sewers were covered by large brick slabs. These certainly reveal a high sense of sanitation. "The unique sewerage system of the Indus people must have been maintained by some municipal organization, and is one of the most impressive of their achievements. No other ancient civilization until that of the Romans had so efficient a system of drains." Wedge-shaped bricks were used in the construction of wells.

Harappa

The site of Harappa is larger than that of Mohenjo Daro. The plan is the same, a raised citadel overlooking the town below. The chief buildings are the great granary and the workers' quarters. The granary, raised on a platform to protect it from floods, consists of two blocks with a passage between them. There are six halls in each block and each hall is partitioned into four rooms. It is presumed that this granary was used for storing the corn which was collected from the peasants as land tax. The workers' quarters consist of parallel rows of houses, each with a courtyard and two rooms. These "coolie lines" are found near circular brick floors, which were used for pounding grain. These "were probably the dwellings of the workmen whose task was to grind corn for the priests and dignitaries who lived in the citadel. Drab and tiny as they were, these cottages were better dwellings than those in which many Indian coolies live at the present day."

At the sites of Rupar, Rangpur and Lothal the typical Harappa brick works, pottery, seals and statuary have been discovered. It is suspected that the Harappa culture had extended as far as the Deccan.

Economic conditions

Spinning and weaving, agriculture and trade were the main occupations of the Indus people. The main crops grown were wheat, barley, sesamum and cotton. There is no evidence of the cultivation of rice. Weavers, goldsmiths, stone cutters, carpenters, ivory workers, painters and potters were among the skilled artisans. A unique find at Harappa is a cutting blade with undulating teeth, *i.e.*, a saw the like of which is not found in the contemporary Mesopotamian civilizations. Gold, silver, copper and bronze were known but not iron. Copper was the predominant metal used to make tools, vessels and seals. Bronze was a rare metal. The use of stone tools was not completely given up. As the Indus civilization belonged to the stage of transition from the age of stone to that of metal it is sometimes known as the Chalcolithic civilization. The prosperity of this civilization was evidently based on a brisk trade, both internal and external. The find of a number of Indus seals in the ancient sites of Mesopotamia not only shows that there was active trade between India and Mesopotamia but suggests that merchants from India actually resided in Mesopotamia. The chief demand in Mesopotamia was probably for Indian cotton. The trade must have been carried on by the land route rather than the sea route as might be inferred from the absence of any representation of sea going vessels among the Indus finds. Sumerian exports to India were scanty and were perhaps confined to precious metals. The Indus people seem to have used binary as well as a decimal system of weights and measures.

Social conditions

The finds undoubtedly reveal a luxurious urban civilization. Men wore robes, which left one shoulder bare. Women wore short or long skirts. The upper garment of a bearded

statuette in steatite contains a trefoil design. Sewing was known as attested by needles made of shell and ivory. Shaving was known. Some men grew beards and trimmed them. Both sexes, women more than men, adorned themselves with a variety of ornaments like fillets, necklaces, girdles, ear-rings, anklets and bracelets made of gold, silver, copper, shell and coloured stones like jade and lapislazuli. The naked bronze figurine of a girl, which has been called a "dancing girl" or a "temple dancer," has one arm fully covered with bangles, from below shoulder to wrist. Almost all figures and carvings of women and goddesses show an elaborate coiffure, arranged with the help of combs and hair pins. Collyrium was used to beautify the eyes. Burnished bronze plates served as mirrors. Dicing and some kind of chess were the pastimes of the elders while the children had numerous playthings like marbles, whistles, carts and animals made of terracotta. Oxen with movable heads and tails, whistles shaped like birds and model monkeys sliding down strings are remarkable. Food was both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. The meagre skeletal remains show that the dead must have been burnt as a rule. The discovery in 1946 of a cemetery of 57 graves proves that burial was not unknown.

Cattle, buffaloes, sheep, pigs, asses and dogs were domesticated. The rhinoceros, the tiger and the elephant were known but not the horse.* The bullock was the usual beast of burden. Axes, daggers and spears made of bronze or copper were the weapons of offence.

Seals and their script

One of the unique Indus finds is the seal usually made of copper or the soft stone called steatite. Over 2,000 seals

* A. D. Pusalkar in his chapter on the Indus Valley Civilization in Vol. 1 of the *History and Culture of the Indian People* thinks that the horse was known to the Indus people (p. 174). See also Basham (*The Wonder that was India*) p. 18.

were discovered in the sites of the Indus region. Each seal bears an emblem depicting an animal, *e.g.*, the humped bull, buffalo, goat, elephant, tiger etc., or some scene, probably from a religious legend, *e.g.*, a hero grappling with tigers, a horned man fighting with a horned tiger, worship of a tree goddess, etc., and contains a brief inscription in a script, which has not yet been deciphered. These seals do not seem to have had any political significance. Each important family or citizen seems to have had a seal, which served as an amulet or as a mark of ownership of property. The script employed contains some 270 pictorial symbols, each perhaps representing a syllable. All attempts of linking them with the Egyptian hieroglyphics or the cuneiform script of Mesopotamia have failed.

Art

The Harappans have not left us any great monument like the Egyptian pyramids or the palace of Cnossus in Crete or the towered temples (the Ziggurat) of Babylonia. Their houses and public buildings were entirely utilitarian. But they were good engravers. On the seals they carved figures with great realism. The statuettes and figurines, *e.g.*, the bearded man in steatite and the "dancing girl" in bronze, as well as the great humped bull with its numerous dewlaps, the roaring tiger, the rhinoceros with its armoured hide, etc. are undoubtedly works of master craftsmen. Even pinheads and beads were carved to resemble tiny monkeys or squirrels. A few specimens of delicately painted pottery have survived.

Religion

Certain statuettes and figures on seals help us to form some definite ideas about the religious beliefs and practices of the Indus people. The common god and goddess worshipped were Siva and Sakti or Kali (the Mother Goddess).

Siva or his prototype, Pasupathi, is represented by a bearded and horned image in a yogic pose surrounded by animals, viz., an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros, a buffalo and two deer. Between the two horns is to be seen a plant-like object. Hence to the Indus people Siva was not only the lord of beasts (Pasupathi) but the fertility God too. The mother Goddess is represented by a horned female figure wearing many ornaments and a fan like head dress and attended by a row of seven women with plaited hair, who are probably priestesses. Since no temples have been discovered it is to be presumed that these were worshipped in domestic sanctuaries. Other objects of worship were the *linga* (numerous cone-shaped objects have been found), the peepal tree, snakes and certain animals, e.g., the bull, but not the cow. The sanctity of water and bathing are also vouchsafed. Representations of tablets on which corn was grown suggest fertility rites. All these go to show very clearly that several aspects of popular Hindu worship of the post-vedic period existed long before the Aryans came to India.

Affiliations of the Harappa Culture :

Who were the Indus people ?

It is generally believed that in the third millennium before Christ the river valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Indus were inhabited by people, who led an organised life that was both urban and luxurious. They knew writing, agriculture, weaving, metal work, building and town planning. They carried on both internal and external trade. They worshipped their Gods, and religion played an important part in their daily lives. It will be futile to link these cultures with one another and suggest that one was influenced by the other. Superficial resemblances with Sumeria had led some scholars in the past to speak of the

Indus culture as Indo-Sumerian. The differences are perhaps more striking. In Egypt *e.g.*, the papyrus plant grew in abundance and the Egyptians made paper to write on. The Mesopotamians had plenty of fine clay and they wrote on clay tablets. The Indus people had neither and they had to engrave their script on copper and steatite. In the present state of our knowledge we have to assume that the Indus civilization was an independent growth and did not owe any debt to the Babylonian, or Sumerian or Egyptian civilizations. "This great civilization owed little to the Middle East, and there is no reason to believe that it was formed by recent immigrants; the cities were built by people who had probably been in the Indus valley for several centuries. The Harappa people were already Indians when they planned their cities, and they altered hardly at all for a thousand years. We cannot fix a precise date for the beginning of this civilization....." (Basham). The date of 3000 B.C. for the Indus civilization is merely provisional. The period 3250—2750 B.C. assigned to it by Sir John Marshall is too short considering the town layers of Mohenjo Daro.

While we may plausibly assume that the Indus culture had no 'marked affinity' with the Mesopotamian cultures it is quite likely that the authors of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Indus civilizations belonged to the same racial stock; perhaps a thousand years before the dawn of any of these civilizations, say about 6000 or 5000 B.C., people living in the valley of the Euphrates wandered to the Indus valley. One way of studying such problems is comparing the skeletal remains of the ancient sites. Of the few skeletal remains of Harappa so far discovered some are of the Mediterranean type, which is the predominant type found in Egypt as well as in Mesopotamia—"long headed, narrow nosed, slender"—and some are Proto-Austroloid with short

stature, snub nose and thick lips. There is no trace of the Nordic or Aryan type. The modern South Indian type is regarded as a blend of the Mediterranean and Proto-Austroloid. Is it possible that the Indus people were the parents of the early Tamils? Some authors led by Father H. Heras have pointed to the similarities between the early Tamil and Indus cultures. Religious worship as represented in the Harappa seals, viz., worship of Siva, Kali, *the linga*, trees and snakes was practised by the early Tamils but not the Vedic Aryans, who adopted them from the conquered natives in course of time. The question revolves round the origin of the Tamils. Certain resemblances between the Dravidian languages and the Brahui dialect of Baluchistan have strengthened the view that the Dravidians (*i.e.*, those who spoke the Dravidian languages) were the earliest immigrants into India. Heras even claimed that the Indus language was a primitive form of Tamil. It is interesting to note that the ancient inhabitants of Lycia (in Asia Minor) called themselves Trimmili in their inscriptions and that Herodotus referred to them as Termilai. As the earliest megalithic tombs discovered in South India are certainly not anterior to the Indus finds it may be safely assumed that the movement of the Dravidians was from the north to the south and not *vice versa*. But the identification of the Indus people with the Dravidians is still a moot point; it must clearly await the decipherment of the Indus script.

The end of the Harappa culture

A careful study of the archaeological remains of the ancient sites of Baluchistan and those of the upper strata of Mohenjo Daro shows that the Harappa culture fell as a result of external attacks. The later levels of the ancient Baluch sites like Rana Ghundai reveal the intrusion of a new and coarse type of pottery replacing the older and finer varie-

ties and bear evidences of burnt villages. This means that the site was attacked and occupied by enemies. The Baluchis fled from their villages and came to Mohenjo Daro as refugees. This is revealed by the fact that the uppermost stratum of Mohenjo Daro contains painted pottery and stone vessels resembling those found in the Baluch sites. Further, it is clear that life at Mohenjo Daro became disorganized and demoralised in its last phase. This was evidently a result of overcrowding and overpopulation caused by a sudden influx of refugees. "Large rooms were divided into smaller, and mansions became tenements; potters' kilns were built within the city boundaries, and one even in the middle of a street. The street plan was no longer maintained. Hoards of jewellery were buried." At Harappa are found new types of cemetery containing fractional burials, *i.e.*, interment of bones collected after cremation, and also new and superior tools and weapons, an indication that the site was occupied by invaders. The remains left by the invaders both at Baluchistan and Harappa contain clear evidence that they had domesticated the horse. "The Indus cities fell to barbarians who triumphed not only through greater military prowess, but also because they were equipped with better weapons, and had learnt to make full use of the swift and terror striking beast of the steppes."* The invaders probably came from Iran.

Who were these invaders that destroyed the Harappa culture? There is no doubt that the Harappans resisted the invaders but were overpowered. Many of the finds of the Indus cities bear marks of wanton destruction. One of the houses of Mohenjo Daro contained a group of skeletons huddled together. Sir John Marshall thought that there must have been an interval of about two centuries between the fall

* Basham, *Ibid.* p. 27

I. C.—2

of the Indus cities and the entry of the Aryans into India. But on the strength of excavations made by him after 1946 Sir Mortimer Wheeler believed that there was no big gap between the fall of Harappa and the coming of the Aryans and that the two events were closely interconnected. The Rig Veda warns the Aryans against permitting the *linga* worshippers to approach their holy places : "Let those whose deity is the Phallus not penetrate our sanctuary."* Again, the Rig Veda speaks of fortified towns (purs and durgas) inhabited by people, ruled by their own kings. In fighting with these kings and their forts the Aryans invoked in many Vedic hymns the help of their god Purandara, which means destroyer of forts. One of the hymns mentions Hari-yupia (Harappa ?) where the Aryans defeated the enemies of sacrifice. Many competent authorities now believe that the above references in the Vedas provide conclusive proof that the destroyers of the Harappa culture were no other than the Aryans.†

Pre-Harappa cultures

In India several sites of Stone Age civilization have been discovered in South India (Bellary and Chingleput districts), Gujerat and Central India. These relate to a long period of many hundreds of years, before 4,000 B.C. The finds include rudely chiselled stone implements belonging to an earlier part of this age, called the Palaeolithic Age or Old Stone Age and better shaped and polished stone implements belonging to a later part, called the New Stone Age or

* K. M. Panikkar : *A Survey of Indian History*, p. 5

† Authors like Benjamin Rowland (*The Art and Architecture of India*) think that the most likely explanation for the disappearance of the Indus civilization is that the great cities had to be abandoned because of the gradual desiccation of the region of Sind and that it was succeeded by an inferior and very obscure culture known as the Jhukar, which endured upto the time of the Aryan invasion.

Neolithic Age. The neolithic folk hunted and tamed animals, cultivated land, lived in caves and produced fire by friction. They wove coarse woollen cloth and buried their dead. Their graves were surrounded by stone circles.

Post Harappa cultures

Civilization gradually advanced from stone to metal. First copper came into use and then iron. Excavations at Adittanallur in the Tinnevely district, Pudukkottai and the Nilgiris have revealed a large number of tombs made of stone and terracotta (pottery). These tombs contained besides the skeletons some pieces of furniture, figures of animals and iron implements. The discovery of iron in these tombs stamps them definitely as post-Harrappan. Probably they belonged to a period round about 1,000 B.C. Some of the tombs of Adittanallur contained gold ornaments like head bands. The people seem to have lived in mud and brick houses and known certain crafts like carpentry and working with iron and gold.

CHAPTER 3

THE CULTURE OF THE VEDIC ARYANS

Introductory

The Aryans who immigrated into India about 2000 B.C. after overrunning the Indus cities were a section of semi-nomadic tribes, who inhabited the steppes stretching over eastern Europe and western Asia. These tribes spoke a language from which were descended Sanskrit, Persian and the European languages. This is proved by the fact that the roots of several words of the Indian, Persian and European languages are the same. These tribes, designated Indo-European, were mainly pastoral.* The Indo-Europeans used horse drawn chariots with spoked wheels. They were fair, tall and long headed. In the third millennium before Christ some of them began to move westward and some eastward either due to pressure of population or in search of fresh pastures or both. These movements definitely were not effected at one time. Those who moved south-west became the ancestors of the Greeks, the Latins and the Teutons. Those who stayed in their original home became the parents of Slavs. Those who came to the Euphrates and conquered Babylon were called the Kassites. Those who moved eastward came to India. They called themselves Aryas (Sanskrit). On the way they left settlements in Asia Minor, Syria and Persia. An inscription of about 1400 B.C. at Bogaz-Koi in south-east Asia Minor mentions the names of the Vedic gods like *Mitra* and *Indra* and numbers like *eka* (one), *pancha* (five)

* The name Aryan is sometimes applied to the parent stock of Indo-Europeans. Eire, the name of the most westerly land reached by the Indo-Europeans, is derived from Aryan. Thus the sphere of Aryan influence extended from India to Ireland.

and *na* (nine). The similarity between Sanskrit and ancient Iranian, between the language of the Vedas and that of the Iranian sacred book the *Zend Avesta*, is striking, as well as the likeness of the words Iran and Aryan. The Aryans first stayed in the Indus region. This is proved by the fact that the Rig Veda, the earliest of the Vedas, makes frequent references to the *Sapta-Sindhu* (the seven Indus rivers, i.e., the Indus, its five tributaries and the Saraswati) while the Ganges is mentioned only in one late hymn. The eastern and southern topography becomes familiar in the later Vedas.

Sources

For a knowledge of the culture of the Vedic Aryans we depend solely on the mass of religious literature left by them viz., the Vedas, the Upanishads, etc., which were committed to memory but not writing. The recitations passed on from generation to generation without any alteration as the texts were considered sacred and no liberty was allowed with either word or sound. The earliest written records in India are those of Asoka. But this does not mean that writing was unknown before. As their culture was rural the Aryans did not build in a big way. They have not left any material remains such as those found at Harappa. "For over a thousand years from the fall of Harappa India is almost an archaeological blank, which at present can only be filled by literary sources."

The culture of the Vedic Aryans may be studied under two heads, (i) the Rig Vedic or early Vedic culture and (ii) the later Vedic culture, in which may be included the study of the Age of the Epics as well.

SECTION I

*The Rig Vedic or Early Vedic Culture**Political conditions*

In the Rig Vedic period (roughly 2000-1000 B.C.) the Aryans stayed in the Punjab. They were at first organized in republican tribes. The tribal leader in course of time became the king and was called *Rajan* (Latin *rex*).^{*} The kings not only fought among themselves but with the natives, whom they called *Dasas* or *Dasyus*, meaning slaves or 'bondsmen'. This means that some of the conquered natives were reduced to slavery. The Rig Veda refers to slaves as one form of wealth. It describes the Dasas as dark-skinned, bull-lipped, evil-tongued (*anasa*), and snub-nosed and as worshippers of the phallus. They were rich in cattle and lived in fortified towns called *purs*, which the Aryans destroyed with the help of their war God Indra, called Purandara ('destroyer of forts'). The Dasyus, however, were ultimately included in Aryan society and assigned to the lowest class. It may be presumed that the Rig Vedic hymns were composed after the conquest of the native kings was completed.

Aryan kingship was both hereditary and elective. It was not absolute as the responsibility of government was shared by the *sabha* and the *samiti*, to which there are many references in the Rig Veda, which, however, does not say what their functions were. They were perhaps tribal meetings, viz., the council of elders and the assembly of the people respectively.^{*} They exercised a great influence on the king and chose a successor in the absence of a direct heir. The chief officers who assisted the king were the

^{*} Several tribes retained their republican features and did not develop into monarchies. See Sec. iii Chap. 4.
UP State Museum, Lucknow

Purohita or the chief priest and the *Senani* or *Senapati*, i.e., the commander of the army. The *Purohita* not only offered sacrifices on behalf of the king but accompanied him to the battlefield and prayed for his success. Royal revenue consisted of gifts from the people, tribute paid by conquered tribes and booty taken in war.

The Rig Veda mentions several kings by name, the most important of whom was Sudas, king of the tribe known as the Bharatas, who lived on the banks of the river Saraswati. In the great "Battle of the Ten Kings" he is said to have defeated a coalition of ten tribes on the banks of the Parushni (Ravi). The Bharatas were later defeated by the Kurus or Kauravas.

During war all the tribesmen had to bear arms. The rich rode on chariots, having two spoked wheels and drawn by two horses yoked abreast, while the poor fought on foot. The chief weapons of offence were the bow and arrow, spear, axe and slingstone. Helmets and shields were worn for protection. The tip of the arrow was sometimes smeared with poison.

Economic conditions

The Aryan economy was pastoral and agricultural, and in such an economy the cattle naturally played an important part. It was the main form of wealth and served as currency, the value of a thing being reckoned in heads of cattle. The sheep, goats, asses and dogs were domesticated. Horses were owned by the gentry, who rode on chariots. The sheep were valued for their wool. Cattle-rearing, agriculture and trade were the main occupations. Wheat and barley (*Yava*) were the main crops grown. As life was rural and simple trade was restricted to the few essentials and was by barter. If price was expressed it was in terms of the unwieldy cow, which was the nearest approach to a standard coin. Gold

coins called 'nishkas' came into use later among the richer classes. Carpenters, goldsmiths, bronze-smiths and weavers were among the skilled artisans. Gold, silver, copper and bronze were used to make ornaments, weapons and utensils. The use of iron was not known to the Rig Vedic Aryans. Iron ore was common but the process of smelting was unknown.

Law and Crimes

Wergeld or blood-money was recognised, and was called *Vairadaya*. *Satadaya* was a person whose life was worth a hundred (cows). Failure to repay debt (*rinam*) was a common offence. The creditor, in order to bring pressure, tied the debtor to a post, and when that failed imposed upon him a period of servitude. Theft, house-breaking, cattle-lifting, highway robbery and cheating (particularly during gambling) were common crimes. Capital punishment was not employed. Satisfaction of the wronged party seems to have been the end of justice. The help of arbitrators (*madhyamasi*) was sometimes sought to settle civil cases. The Rig Veda does not refer to the judicial functions of the king, though it is certain that he must have acted as the chief judge and enforced the common law.

Social conditions

Aryan society was simple, pastoral, agricultural and rural. City life was unknown. The people lived in simple mud huts and did not build in stone or brick. The unit of society was the patriarchal family. A group of families bound by ties of blood and living together was called a *Grama*. In the Rig Veda this word is used to mean a group of related families rather than a settlement. The father was the head of the family and wielded considerable authority over the members. The son was preferred. Women occu-

pied a position of respect. Marriage was monogamous and indissoluble. Domestic religious ceremonies were to be performed by the husband and wife together. No restrictions were placed on the education of women. Some women like Ghosa and Lopamudra composed hymns. Slaves were few in number and were possessed by the gentry, being counted as property along with cattle, houses and lands.

The Rig Vedic Aryans consumed wheat, barley, meat, milk and milk products and fruits. Certain intoxicating drinks made from plant and grain called the *soma* and the *sura* were in use. The former was drunk during sacrifices and considered religious. Probably it was less intoxicating and consumed in small quantities. The latter was a secular drink and frowned upon by the priests probably because it was very potent. Dress consisted of two or three garments of cotton and wool and sometimes skins. The lower garment was called *vasa* and the upper *addivasa*. Ornaments were of gold. The men grew beards though shaving was known. The razor was called *kshura*. The women oiled and combed their hair. Both men and women were fond of music and dancing. The drum, the lute and the flute were the musical instruments. Hunting, horse and chariot racing and dicing were the pastimes of the gentry. One of the few secular hymns of the Rig Veda, known as the "Gamester's Lament" gives an interesting account of the plight of the gambler. It contains the following lines among others :

- "The dice roll down, the dice leap upwards,
unarmed they withstand the man with arms.
They are heavenly coals, strewn over the board,
and though they are cool they burn up the heart.
"The forsaken wife of the gambler sorrows,
and the mother of the son who wanders afar.

In debt, in fear, in need of money (wealth),
 he goes by night to the house of others.....
 “ ‘Don’t play with dice, but plough your furrow !
 Delight in your property, prize it highly !
 Look to your cattle and look to your wife,
 you gambler ! ’ Thus noble Savitur tells me.....*.

Towards the close of the Rig Vedic period society was divided into four classes, the priestly class or *brahmana*, the princely class or *kshatriya*, the commonalty, i.e., the class of peasants and traders or *vaisya*, and the class of serfs and labourers or *sudra*. The slaves did not form a class. The origin of the class system, which became the basis of the caste system of a later day, is not clear. A plausible reconstruction is as follows. Even before the Aryans entered India they had recognised a two-fold classification, viz., the nobility and the commons. The records of many early Indo-European tribes suggest that the tribal aristocracy was a recognised feature of their society. Even the early hymns of the Rig Veda refer to the *kshatra* or the nobility and the *vis* or the commonalty. When the Aryans settled in India they began to worship nature gods and performed sacrifices to invoke their favour. With the growth of complicated sacrificial rituals the priests, who had special knowledge and training, acquired a privileged status. Though at the outset there was some inevitable mixture of Aryan and native blood very soon the fair skinned Aryans began to lay stress on purity of blood and looked down upon intermarriage with the Dasyus. As class divisions hardened the Aryans excluded from their inner social circles those whose blood had become impure on account of contact with the Dasyus. These along with the latter were called Sudras and were employed as servants and labourers. They formed the lowest and perhaps

* Basham. Ibid. pp 403-5.

the most numerous class. The *Mahabharata* refers to Sudras as a tribe. It is probable that the Dasas and the Sudras were pre-Aryan and non-Aryan tribes, who were defeated and gradually absorbed by the Aryans. Two Rig Vedic hymns describe Indra as converting Dasas into Aryans. The *Purusha Sukta* or Creation Hymn in the last chapter of the Rig Veda makes a symbolic reference to all the four classes. This hymn deals with the creation of the world by the gods who offered the First Man (Purusha) as sacrifice. "His (the Purusha's) mouth became a Brahman, his arm was made into a Rajanya, his thigh was transformed into a Vaisya, and from his feet sprang the Sudra. The moon arose from his mind, the sun was born from his eye, from his mouth Indra and Agni were born, the wind was born from his breath," etc. This simple class system in course of time evolved into the rigid caste system, under which inter-class marriage (connubium) and inter-class dining (commensality) were prohibited. While the class system was based upon one's profession the caste system, as it developed was based upon birth. Throughout the Vedic period and even later the system remained fluid and the functional basis was not forgotten. There are several instances of change of the "caste-profession", of a *brahmana* becoming a warrior (Parasurama) and *vice versa* (Visvamitra). The conversion of class into castes and their expansion into thousands of sects and sub-sects was a very gradual process running through the centuries. The immigration of foreign races, the intolerance of the Muslim rulers, fear of impure contacts and the growth of professions are important contributory factors.

Religion

The Aryans were impressed by the great phenomena of nature and deified and worshipped them. Varuna was the Sky-god. He was the lord of the universe and cosmic

order. Indra was the god of War and was called Purandara or Fort Destroyer. He created the rain-storm and was armed with the thunderbolt. Next in importance came Surya, the sun god, also called Mitra. Usha was the goddess of Dawn and supposed to be his consort. Rudra was the fierce storm-god. Soma (moon), Agni (fire) and Vayu, (wind) were deified and worshipped. Elaborate sacrifices were made for the propitiation of these gods, for whom there were neither temples nor images. Offerings like ghee, grain, flesh of sheep and *soma* were made to Agni, who represented the other gods. *Adityas*, the *Asvins* and the *Vasus* were minor deities. The idea of the one Supreme God was a later development.

Literature

The most remarkable thing about the early Aryans is that they have left a mass of sacred literature called the Vedas, the Upanishads etc. This literature is generally divided into two, the *Sruti* ("heard") and the *Smriti* ("remembered"). The Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads and the Aranyakas are called the *Sruti* or divine revelation. The Vedangas, the Upavedas, the Sutras and Dharma-sastras are called the *Smriti* or works written by great rishis or sages. Of the four Vedas (Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharvana), the Rig Veda is the oldest, and most important. It is a 'samhita' or collection of 1018 hymns divided into ten chapters. The hymns are addressed to the forces of nature conceived as gods or goddesses and were meant to be recited while making offerings and performing sacrifices. Some of the hymns like the *Gayatri* and the *Purusha sukta* are still recited daily by the orthodox Brahman. The Rig Veda contains no reference to writing or writing materials.

SECTION II

The Later Vedic Culture

In the later Vedic Age (roughly 1000—600 B.C.) the Aryans expanded from the Punjab into the Gangetic valley. The Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Aranyakas, etc., were composed during this period. This is also the age described in the two great epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Probably they were composed during this period. The puranas or the 'old world legends' took shape 'later. Excavations recently made at the ancient site of Hastinapura (about 1000 B.C.) have revealed only a few traces of houses of unbaked brick, a few copper tools and some shreds of painted pottery. These show that the culture of the later Vedic period continued to be simple and rural. The sources for a study of this culture are again purely literary.

Political conditions

The Aryans who moved eastward came right upto Bengal. Kingdoms became larger in size and were ruled over by more powerful kings than in the Rig Vedic period. Parikshit and Janamejaya, who ruled over the Kuru country between the Jumna and the Ganges, and Janaka, who ruled over Videha from its capital Mithila, were great kings. Other kingdoms, like Kosala, Kasi, Anga and Magadha, were growing. From the Jumna the Aryans moved south down the Chambal and settled first in Malwa and later reached the Narmada. The Yadavas, a tribe of the Aryans, who were originally settled in Mathura on the Jumna, sent out a branch of colonists to Kathiawar. The Krishna legend is perhaps based upon this fact of colonisation. Kings patronised hermits, philosophers and men of letters and exercised supreme judicial powers. To assert their supre-

macy the most powerful among them performed elaborate sacrifices, the *Rajasuya*, the *Vajapeya* and the *Asvamedha*, which are not mentioned in the Rig Veda. The *Rajasuya* was the sacrifice performed on the occasion of royal consecration. The *Vajapaya* or "drink of strength" was "a sort of rejuvenation ceremony, which not only restored the vital forces of a middle aged king but raised him from the status of a simple *raja* to that of a *samrat*....." The *Asvamedha* or horse-sacrifice commemorated the successful challenge thrown by a king at his neighbours. A specially consecrated horse was allowed to roam about for a year, followed by a select band of warriors. If it strayed into the territory of a neighbouring king he had either to do homage or fight. If the horse completed a year of triumphant wandering it was brought back to the capital and sacrificed. The *Brahmanas* contained detailed instructions regarding the performance of these sacrifices. The kings were engaged in constant war with one another. In the age of the *Mahabharatha* there were, according to tradition, 56 kingdoms in north and central India and all the kings are said to have taken part in the battle of Kurukshetra fought about 900 B.C.*

The old tribal assemblies, viz., the *Sabha* and the *Samiti* had definitely lost their power and to that extent royal power had increased. It was limited only by custom, tradition and the power of the Purohit. The king's retinue (*Ratnin*) included, besides the Purohit and the *Senapati*, the chamberlain, the charioteer, and a host of palace servants.

Economic conditions

Life was no longer as simple as it was in the Rig Vedic age. Though there were no cities as yet, a few villages were developing into towns due to trade or royal patronage. New

* The dates of 1500 B.C. and 1400 B.C. are sometimes assigned to the Mahabharata War.

trades and crafts had appeared, viz., metal work, especially working with tin, lead and iron (called Black Bronze), weaving, dyeing, embroidery, basket making, rope making, carpentry etc. Iron was a rare metal. The village population included, besides peasants and traders, moneylenders, acrobats, fortune tellers, musicians and dancers. Well-to-do householders employed a number of domestic servants. Agriculture made rapid progress. Heavy ploughs drawn by 8, 12 and 24 oxen were used. Rice came to be grown.

Social conditions

Marriages became more and more endogamous thus paving the way for the conversion of the class system into the caste system. Marriage rules and ceremonial ritual as well as the rites of sacrifices became more complicated. The priestly class became indispensable and grew in power and importance. Even the king could not flout the Brahman. For all his spiritual authority the Brahman had to lead a strict life of study and austerity. He was to shun worldly honour and depend on the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas for his material existence. If he deviated from this high standard he was no better than a Sudra. The Brahman and the Kshatriya were superior to the Vaisya, who was permitted to do a few religious rites. The Sudra could not do any religious rite. He could neither recite nor hear any Vedic text.

Royal brides chose their husbands from an assembly of princes ('*swayamvara*'). There were learned women as in the previous age. They composed verses and took part in philosophical disputations. In the Upanishads the sage Yajnavalkya answers questions put to him by Maitrayi and Gargi.

Religion

Religious beliefs underwent a great change. The old nature gods gradually gave place to the celestial trinity

Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, conceived as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. The worship of Krishna and Narayana was coming into vogue. The appearance of the personal gods, the worship of snakes, trees, rivers and local godlings, the belief in good and evil spirits and the employment of charms and spells to control them, the use of magic formulae to cure diseases, etc. paved the way for the growth of popular Hinduism, which was clearly the result of the assimilation of the native religious practices by the Aryans. Sacrifices and domestic rituals became more elaborate. Some of the sacrifices required the attention of sixteen or seventeen priests. Domestic rituals were succinctly described in the Grihya sutras, which were special editions of the Dharma-sastras for the edification of the householder.

The Upanishadic teachings encouraged metaphysical speculation. The ascetics and sages were taken up with the study of the soul, the relation between the individual soul and the universal soul or Brahman, the transmigration of the soul, *karma* and rebirth, etc. Matter was regarded as illusory (*maya*) *Moksha* or escape from rebirth and the identification of the individual soul with the divine came to be the end and aim of life. Thought was generally otherworldly. It refused to concern itself with the pleasures and sorrows of mundane existence.

Literature

The Sama Veda is a collection of more than 500 hymns, a majority of which are repetitions of the Rig Vedic hymns, set to tune and meant to be sung during sacrifices. They exhibit a surprising degree of metrical skill and command of language. The Yajur Veda deals elaborately with sacrificial ritual and prayer. It is the earliest prose work in Sanskrit. The Atharva Veda deals with spells and charms to control the spirits and demons and also gives recipes for snake bite

etc. It definitely reveals non-Aryan influences. The *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* are in the nature of notes and commentaries on the Vedas. The latter contain the essence of the Vedic teachings, the *Vedanta*, and are meant to be taught by the sage to a select group of disciples. They deal with matter, *atma* (soul) and Brahma (God) and elaborate the doctrines of *karma* or rebirth and *mukti* or salvation. The *Aranyakas* contain the mystical portions of the *Brahmanas* bereft of rituals for the guidance of the hermits living in forests.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL LIFE AND THOUGHT IN
ANCIENT INDIA

In this and the following five chapters we will be studying briefly the culture of the Hindus as it developed from the Vedic Age to the period of the Muslim conquest. It was a synthesis of the Vedic culture and the older Harappa culture. In fact the latter was absorbed into the former. The modern Hindu is a Hindu; he is not an Aryan; he is neither a non-Aryan strictly. Some of his practices, sanctified by custom and usage, are not sanctioned by the ancient and sacred texts, e.g., the practice of untouchability (happily now ended), that of tying the *mangala sutra* round the neck of the bride by the bridegroom during marriage, a confusion of castes and sub-castes, *sati* which was a common practice until it was suppressed by law in the last century, etc. Without going into the details of the political history of the period we will study Hindu culture under the following heads (i) Political life and thought, (ii) Social life (iii) Economic conditions, under the head 'Everyday Life,' (iv) Religion, (v) the Arts, and (vi) Language and literature.

*Sources for a study of the
political thought of ancient India*

Politics in ancient India was not studied as a branch of philosophy as in Europe since the days of Plato and Aristotle but in a pragmatistical manner. There were no schools of political philosophy discussing the origin of the state, the ideal form of government, the basis of law, etc., but there were important books dealing with the science of government like the *Arthashastra*, the *Nitisara* of Kamandaka, and the

Sukraniti. Without much theorising and justifying any particular line of conduct the text-books dealt with in detail and in a practical manner the sciences of *dandaniti* or the administration of force and *rajaniti* or the conduct of kings. Kautilya or Chanakya, the author of the *Arthasastra*, was a Brahman minister of Chandragupta Maurya (322-298 B.C.) His work is the earliest scientific treatise on government. This is a voluminous work divided into 15 books and containing 150 chapters, the whole being divided into three parts, viz., (i) government dealing with the king, the council and the various departments, including organisation of national economy, (ii) civil and criminal law, and (iii) diplomacy, inter-state law and war. The *Nitisara* or Essence of Politics of Kamandaka, belonging perhaps to the Gupta period, the *Sukraniti*, supposed to be the work of the ancient sage Sukracharya but in fact a late medieval work, and the *Nitivakya-mrita* of Somadeva Suri, a Jain writer of the eleventh century, all deal with the details of statecraft more or less on the model of the *Arthasastra*. Besides these works dealing specifically with statecraft the *Santi Parva* of the *Mahabharata* the *Manusmriti* ascribed to the primeval sage Manu, composed probably during the Gupta period, and several passages from the Vedas and Upanishads throw light on what was thought to be the ideal human conduct as well as government.

SECTION I

Kingship

Theories of royal absolutism

The ancient Hindu king was absolute and considered divine. The *Aitareya Brahmana*, one of the Vedic texts of about 800 B.C., contains the earliest legend on the origin of kingship. The gods, who were at war with the demons,

were fighting a losing battle. They chose Indra as their king and he led them to victory. According to the *Taittiriya Upanishad* the discomfited gods prayed to Prajapati, the chief god, who thereupon sent his son Indra to be their king. The king was first and foremost a leader in war. He acquired divine authority by performing the three great sacrifices, viz., the Rajasuya, the Vajapeya and the Asvamedha. The ceremonies of the Rajasuya (Royal Consecration) lasted for a year. In one of the ceremonies the king took three steps on a tiger's skin even as Vishnu measured the universe with his three paces. The consecrated king became one of the gods. Further sacrifices, viz., the Vajapeya and the Asvamedha, besides proclaiming his power, restored and reinforced his sacred character. Later on the Rajasuya was replaced by a simple ceremony of *abhisheka* but the ritual still sought to confer upon the king special powers. The *Manusmriti* declared that when the world was without a king the Lord created a king for the protection of all. He was made of Indra, Vayu, Surya, Agni, Yama and other gods. "Because he has been formed of fragments of all those gods the king surpasses all other beings in splendour. Even an infant king must not be despised, as though a mere mortal, for he is a great god in human form." The Kushan kings, probably influenced by the Chinese idea that the emperor was the son of Heaven, adopted the title Devaputra.

While ancient Hindu thought accepted without question the Divine Right theory of kingship Buddhist ideas were different and clearly recalled a primitive social contract. The Jains also had similar ideas. It is interesting to note that both Buddhism and Jainism were heterodox sects and did not refer to god. The Buddhist legend of the *Mahasammata* says that during the early days of the cosmic cycle mankind lived in midair, in a sort of fairyland, without hunger or thirst and without clothing, property, family or government.

As the process of cosmic decay began mankind came down to live upon the earth, became hungry and thirsty, sought shelter, divided themselves into classes and developed, by common consent, the institutions of family and private property. Crimes like theft, murder and adultery began. Hence the people met together and decided to appoint one of them to maintain order. He was to be given a share of the produce of their lands. He was called the *Mahasammata* or the "Great Chosen One" and bore the title of Raja.

In ancient Hindu India the Divine Right theory of kingship, and not the contractual, held the field. The king alone could establish order and to him was due not only absolute obedience but reverence as to a god. According to the *Ramayana*, "where the land is kingless the cloud gives no rain to the earth; the son does not honour his father, nor the wife her husband; men do not meet in assemblies, nor make gardens and temples; the rich are unprotected, and shepherds and peasants sleep with bolted doors. A river without water, a forest without grass, a herd of cattle without a herdsman, is the land without a king."

Checks on royal power

The Hindu king was an autocrat. He was not limited by any legal or constitutional checks, but in practice there were a few checks on his sovereignty. An important check was the power of the Brahmans, who were the custodians and interpreters of the Sacred Law of the scriptures called the *Varnasrama Dharma* or "the right way of life for all classes and ages," or the *Sanatana Dharma* or the eternal law of the land. No king could dare infringe the Sacred Law. The legend of Vena was repeated by several texts as a warning against self-willed kings. Vena was a king who ordered that all sacrifices should be made to himself and enforced inter-class marriages. He did not pay heed to the words of the

Brahmans. The *rishis* grew angry and slew him with blades of *kusa* grass, which turned into spears in their hands. No king who openly flouted the feelings of the priestly class could consider himself safe. The dynasties of the Nandas, the Mauryas and the Sungas fell as a result of the intrigues of Brahman ministers. Next to the Brahmans the king's own councillors or advisers acted as a check on royal absolutism. The treatises on politics like the *Arthashastra* recommend to the king to listen to the counsel of his ministers, for according to the well-known dictum a chariot could not move on a single wheel. The ministers are told to be fearless in offering advice. A third check was public opinion. Though there were no popular assemblies in the post-Vedic age the fear of popular discontent or revolt served to keep the king on his guard. According to the *Ramayana*, Rama though he was himself convinced of the innocence of his wife Sita, exiled her on hearing reports that his subjects suspected her chastity. The Buddhist Jataka tales give several instances of kings who were deposed by popular revolt. The paternal concept of kingship was a well-understood principle of Hindu polity.

Functions of the king

The king had an onerous responsibility. He had to keep himself active for the sake of his subjects; his good depended on their welfare. The *Arthashastra*, which supports acquisition and maintenance of despotic power, is clear on this point. It declares: "In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness, in the welfare of his subjects, his welfare. The king's good is not that which pleases him, but that which pleases his subjects. Therefore the king should be ever active, and should strive for prosperity, for prosperity depends on effort, and failure on the reverse." The *Arthashastra* lays down a rigorous time-table for the king's day,

according to which he was to be engaged in State affairs for more than sixteen hours. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador who lived in the court of Chandragupta Maurya, says that the latter used to hear the complaints of his subjects even while he was in the hands of his masseurs. In one of his edicts Asoka says "All men are my children. And just as I desire for my children that they may enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness both in this world and the next, so do I desire the same for all men." In another edict he compares his governors to skilful nurses, appointed for the welfare and happiness of his people. He regarded himself as the first among public servants, the most hardworking of them all. His duties were the debt which he owed to his subjects. And he was quite anxious to get a release from this debt. An edict declares : "In times past, there was not before at all hours discharge of administrative business or the receiving of reports. So by me has thus been arranged : at all ours, when I am eating, or in the harem, or in the inner apartments, or even in the ranches, or the place of religious instruction or in the parks, everywhere Prativedakas are posted with instructions to report on the affairs of my people." Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited India in the reign of Harsha, speaks of his tireless tours of inspection. Harsha was "punctilious in the discharge of his duties. The king made visits of inspection throughout his dominion, not residing for long at any particular place, but having temporary buildings erected at each place of sojourn. He was indefatigable and the day was too short for him." Clearly a weakling was not fit for the throne. The *Yuvaraja* or crown prince was often actively associated with his father in civil government and war and thus carefully trained for kingship.

The king's duties included protection of life, property, religion and custom of his subjects as well as the protection

of his kingdom against external aggression. He had to preserve the system of classes and castes and punish those who broke its rules. He had to ensure inheritance of family property, put down theft, punish extortion and oppression by his officers and protect orphans, widows and the poor. He had to develop irrigation and provide famine relief. He had to make liberal grants to temples and learned Brahmins. He had to encourage learning and promote the arts. Thus his duties were political, religious, social and cultural.

Safety of the king

Spies, Census

A powerful king who directed all the affairs of his kingdom, made many enemies and had to take every precaution to protect himself. He changed his sleeping apartments frequently. The palace of the Mauryan kings at Pataliputra contained several contrivances like hidden doorways, hollow pillars and collapsible floors. The *Arthashastra* tells us that the chamber of the king was guarded in the night by armed women in the first enclosure, the aged and personal attendants in the second enclosure, the dwarfs in the third and the armed sentry in the fourth. The king often employed spies to keep himself informed of possible plots or rebellions against him. Kautilya was a great advocate of the spy system. The spies were recruited from "Brahmins unable to make a living by their learning, merchants fallen on evil days, barbers, astrologers, humble servitors, prostitutes, peasants." They were trained and organized through "Institutes of Espionage" and often sent information in cipher. The king employed special spies to spy over the ministers. Desparadoes were sometimes employed to do away with those enemies of the king, whose public trial was considered inexpedient. To detect crime or sedition the spy frequented taverns, brothels

and gambling dens. Often he went about in disguise as a holy man or a fortune teller. He praised the king in public. Mixing with the subjects of the enemy king he not only obtained information about the strength and plans of the enemy but encouraged sedition against him.

The imperial census supplemented the espionage system in maintaining royal absolutism. Under the Mauryas a permanent census was maintained by the census department. The census was compiled with the help of the village and town officials and checked by spies. It gave details of wealth, character, status, movements etc., of people, both native and foreign. The system of census along with that of the spies helped the king to nip any conspiracy or rebellion in the bud.

The King's Council

The *Arthashastra* says that just as a chariot cannot move on a single wheel government is not possible without assistance. "Therefore a king should appoint councillors and listen to their advice." The royal council called *mantri-parishad* was a body of elder statesmen chosen by the king with the utmost care. The number varied from seven to thirty-seven according to different authorities. Often it was small. It included the *Purohita*, the *Senapati*, the *Yuvaraja*, the *Sannidhata* (the treasurer), the *Samaharta* (the chief tax collector), the *Pradvivaka* (chief judge and legal adviser), the *Mahakshapatilaka* (secretary and chief record-keeper) and others. The king usually chose one of them (not the *Purohita*) as his chief counsellor or *Mahamantrin*. The purpose of the council was to aid and advise the king and not to govern. The meetings of the council were held in strict secrecy. The texts say that women and "talking birds" like parrots must not be allowed anywhere near the council chamber lest information be passed on to agents of the enemy. The council often influenced the king with its combined know-

ledge and wisdom ; transacted business in his absence and took minor decisions of its own accord. The Girnar inscription of Rudradaman, the Saka Satrap of Malwa, says that when he proposed to his council a rebuilding of the Girnar dam they advised him against it and that he thereupon undertook the work himself at the expense of the privy purse and not of public funds. The *Raja-tarangini* (Chronicle of Kashmir) gives instances of a king who was deposed by the privy council, and of a king's nomination of his successor being rejected by it.

Though the king was expected to appoint his ministers by merit alone, in course of time councillorships became hereditary. This served to weaken the hands of the king. Sometimes a minister became the *de facto* ruler and the king a mere puppet, e.g., the *Peshwas*, the hereditary ministers of the Mahratta state, totally eclipsed the successors of Sivaji. Sometimes the minister usurped the throne and started his own dynasty, e.g., Saluva Narasimha, the able minister of the last Sangama kings of Vijayanagar, usurped the throne and founded his own line. The usurpation, however, was justified.

Was the Hindu king a law-maker ?

Neither the king nor his council were legislative bodies in the modern sense of the term. As said above, Sacred Law and custom were inviolable. The royal decree or *sasana* was not a new law, but merely an order, which applied the established law to particular cases. To note down, transmit and preserve the royal decrees a number of scribes, clerks and secretaries were employed. To prevent errors each draft was read and attested by witnesses. The secretaries carefully maintained the records. Harsha maintained a Department of Archives and Records, in which all official letters and records of all incidents, which had any public significance, were arranged

and kept. The Chola kings employed an official called *Olainayagam* to note down and keep the royal decrees. Grants of land, etc., to individuals or temples were inscribed on copper plates or on the stone walls of temples.

The palace, royal amusements, harem

The Hindu king maintained himself in great pomp and luxury. His palace was often the best residential building of the kingdom and was maintained by a chamberlain, who commanded a large staff of palace servants. A number of priests, astrologers, physicians, poets, musicians, painters, and skilled artisans were in the service of the palace and enjoyed royal patronage. These along with the royal charioteer, herald and the *Vidushaka* (court jester) constituted the retinue of the king. Accompanied by this retinue, his queens, relations and courtiers, and followed by contingents of his army, the king frequently undertook tours through his kingdom. Inspection, dealing out justice, chastisement of disobedient officials and vassals, pilgrimage, sight-seeing, picnic and hunting were often combined in such tours.

Kings took pride in patronizing art and letters. Some were themselves scholars and musicians of no mean order; Harsha was the author of three Sanskrit dramas and Samudragupta was skilled in playing the *vina*. Among the less intellectual pursuits of the king were hunting and gambling and sometimes drinking in privacy in the company of a few select confidantes of both sexes.

The harem or *antapurah* was often an interior wing of the palace which contained the queens and concubines of the king. It was governed by an elderly official called *kancukin* looked upon as a fatherly friend by the king as well as by the ladies of the harem. The king and the lesser queens and concubines moved about in some fear of the chief queen, who wielded considerable authority.

Succession

Normally primogeniture was the rule which governed succession but the scriptures declared that a diseased or infirm prince should not succeed to the throne. The *Arthashastra* roundly declares: "A wicked son, though an only one, should never ascend the throne." The absence of a strict rule of primogeniture led to feuds among princes and weakened kingdoms. Princes sometimes killed their aged fathers so that they might occupy the throne earlier. Ajata-satru, himself a parricide, was in his turn killed by his son. To satisfy the impatience of the prince an elderly king sometimes abdicated his throne voluntarily. If a king died childless a new king was chosen by the leading nobles and citizens of the capital.

Brother to brother succession was practised among the Saka satraps of Ujjain. When there was no more brother to succeed, the eldest son of the eldest brother succeeded to the throne. In Kerala succession through the male line gave place to a matrilinear inheritance about the twelfth century. According to this system, called *Marumakkattayam*, the king's eldest sister's son succeeded him and not his own son.

A woman on the throne was considered extraordinary. A sonless king could adopt a son. But in practice ruling queens were not uncommon in Hindu India. Queen Didda of Kashmir, who ruled in the tenth century, was wicked and ambitious. She acted as regent for her sons and retained control in her hands by the cruel device of killing her sons one by one before they reached majority. Rudramba, the Kakatiya queen of Warangal (1259—88) was an able queen, who drafted state documents in the masculine gender. Many queens acted as regents for their minor sons.

Officials : Bureaucracy

Some political texts divide officials into two classes,

Matisachiva or deliberative officials or councillors and *Kar-masachiva* or executive officials. High ranking officials were called *Mahamatras*. The *Arthasastra* refers to the *Adyakshas* or superintendents of several departments, viz., crown lands, forests, waste lands, mines (including pearl fisheries and salt pans), treasury, tax-collection, state-granaries, commerce, customs, shipping, armoury, cavalry, elephants, chariots, state spinning and weaving establishments, liquor, prostitutes etc. Asoka created new cadres of superintendents called the *Dharma-Mahamatras*, (Censors of Public Morals) whose duty was to see that Asoka's edicts on *Dharma* were carried out, and *Stri-adyaksha Mahamatras* for the protection of women. The *Purushas* and the *Yuktas* referred to in the inscriptions of Asoka were probably lesser officials, the core of the civil service, who functioned under the *Adyakshas*.

The officials were paid in cash. The highest officials like the *Purohita* and the *Mahamantrin* were paid salaries as high as 48,000 *panas* (silver pieces) probably per month. The period of payment is not specified by the *Arthasastra*. At the lower strata the palace servants, attendants etc., received 60 *panas*. The labourer on the crown land received only one and a quarter *pana* together with provisions. After the Mauryan period it became a recognised practice to assign to high officials the revenues of a whole village or district.

"Red tape" could not be avoided in such a well organized bureaucracy as detailed above. The *Arthasastra* recommends that each department should be headed by more than one chief so that concentration of power as well as embezzlement might be avoided. No official could take a decision without reference to his superior. Officers, particularly accounts officers, were to be transferred frequently and were not to be kept in the same post for more than five years. Government accounts were to be audited every year.

Provincial and Local Government

Village autonomy

A big kingdom, e.g., the Maurya empire, was divided into provinces. A provincial governor called *Uparika* or *Rajuka* was appointed and controlled by the king. If the central government grew weak the governor assumed kingly power and insignia and called himself a *Maharaja*. His office became hereditary. The province, in course of time, became an independent kingdom. Control of provincial governors was always a thorny problem. A province was sub-divided into districts and taluks and placed under the *Pradesikas* and the *Sthanikas* respectively. At the lowest level there was an officer called *Gopa* placed in charge of from five to ten villages. The district and taluk chiefs were immediately responsible to the governor. The *Gopa* had numerous functions. He collected revenue and supervised a fixed number of households. He recorded not only births and deaths, and income and expenditure of the families under his charge but made notes of visitors received by them and their movements.

The village was the unit of government and enjoyed considerable autonomy. The village headman (the *gramani*) was a hereditary official, who acted as the agent of the king for purposes of tax collection. He had under him an accountant, a watchman and a toll collector. He was himself a landowner and was remunerated with tax-free lands. There are instances of both good and wicked headmen. A good headman collected only what was due from the villagers and championed the cause of the villagers. A wicked headman, on the other hand, fleeced the villagers and punished them severely for minor offences. The villagers often appealed to the king for protection against wicked headmen. Usually the headman arranged for the defence of the village, particularly against the organised gangs of cattle-lifters. He

presided over the village council consisting of five elderly and respectable villagers (the *Panchayat*) which attended to purely local affairs and settled disputes. In the south villages were often governed by elected committees. Two inscriptions at Uttramerur Chaturvedimangalam (a Brahman village) in the Chola kingdom, says that the village was governed by five elected committees. The village was divided into thirty *kudumbus* or wards, each of which selected a representative by lot (*kuda olai*). The thirty members so selected formed themselves into five committees or *variya*ms of six members each, responsible for the maintenance of gardens (*thotta variyam*) and tanks and irrigation channels (*eri variyam*)*. Membership of the committee was limited to those who were between 35 and 70 years of age, had property, say a house and a bit of land, and were learned in the Vedas. Those who had been on the committee for three consecutive years, those who had failed to submit their accounts and those who had committed crimes like robbery and incest were disqualified from membership.

Over and above these committees, which had specified functions, the elite of the village, mostly Brahmans, met periodically in an assembly, usually in the local temple. The *Mahasabha*, as it was known, possessed ultimate authority in almost all affairs of the village except transfer of property, which required the sanction of the central government. It possessed all rights over the public lands, supervised and controlled the private estates, reclaimed forests and waste lands and collected the land revenue on behalf of the central government and taxes for its own purposes. It also looked after the maintenance of roads and irrigation works and supervised the working of the various charitable endowments—religious, medical and educational. It passed and

* The functions of the *samvatsara variyam* or annual committee, the *panchavara variyam* and the *Pon variyam* are not clear.

recorded resolutions. Either the *Mahasabha* or a separate judicial committee heard and settled disputes. The criminal law was mild and capital punishment was rare. Guilty men had to part with so many cows and light so many perpetual lamps (*nanda-vilakku*) in the village temple. The transactions of the village assembly and committees, recorded on the walls of village temples, show "vigorous community life, and are a permanent memorial to the best side of early Indian politics."

Municipal government

Each town was placed under the charge of an official called *Nagaraka* or *Purapala*, who maintained order, arranged for watch and ward and enforced rules of sanitation. He was also responsible for revenue collection in his town. To maintain peace he commanded a corps of policemen, spies and troops. Like the villages cities too had their councils. Megasthenes describes the government of Pataliputra by a board of thirty, divided into six committees of five members each. Collectively the board looked after public works, markets, temples and the regulation of prices. Individually the six committees looked after the following: (1) supervision of the industrial arts and protection of the artisans, (2) care of foreign travellers and merchants, (3) registration of births and deaths, (4) supervision of markets, weights and measures, (5) passing manufactured goods for sale by imprinting the state-stamp (*abhijnanamudra*) on them if satisfactory, and (6) collection of a tithe or one-tenth of the sale price as tax. This was the chief revenue of the municipality. It may be presumed that other towns were governed on similar lines. Towns, like villages, thus enjoyed considerable autonomy. Some towns issued their own coinage.

Finance

The chief source of royal income was the land tax, traditionally one-sixth (*shadbhaga*) of the gross produce of the land. Megasthenes and Kautilya speak of one-fourth as the tax, which was paid in kind. In the Middle Ages many villages substituted a regular annual cash payment for payment in kind. For purposes of assessment of land tax lands were thoroughly surveyed and records of ownership carefully maintained. Besides land tax the cultivators had to make regular cash payments for the use of water from a tank or canal owned by the king, grazing tax, house tax etc. Customs levies or tolls were collected from travelling merchants by the *Antapala*, whose duty it was to maintain the roads from the proceeds of the duty. In the Mauryan period the *Antapala* even made good any loss suffered by a merchant from thieves. Excise duties were levied on the sale of liquor. Licence fees were levied upon traders, artisans, prostitutes, owners of gambling houses, etc. Fines from courts constituted another important source of revenue.

The *Manusmriti*, the *Arthashastra* and other ancient texts justified taxation on two grounds. Firstly, land (including forests and minerals) and water belonged to the king and those who used them should pay for them. Secondly, the subjects should pay for protection provided by the king. It was implied that if the king failed in his duty of protection he had no moral right to receive tax. While collecting taxes the king is asked to bear in mind a few principles. The texts warn him against excess collection by his officers as nobody can hold honey in his mouth without tasting some of it. Taxes should not rob the due profit of the taxpayer; they should not curb trade or industry. A king should tax as a bee sucks honey, without hurting the flower. The same article in the course of trade should not be taxed twice. Taxes should not be increased without due notice. Under abnor-

mal conditions, *e.g.*, external attacks, rebellion, famine or pestilence the king was justified in adopting drastic measures like raising taxes without notice, collecting forced loans and benevolences from the well to do, resumption of grants and confiscation of the accumulated treasures of individuals, especially goldsmiths, and even religious establishments, particularly those of the heterodox sects.

According to the *Sukraniti* the king was to retain one sixth of his income as reserve. This was done mostly in the shape of bullion and jewels and allowed to accumulate. It was touched only in grave emergencies. The accumulated treasures of kings were not only useless economically but often tempted outsiders to invade and rob, *e.g.*, the first invasions of Muhammad of Ghazni whetted his appetite and he repeated it year after year. One half was to be spent on the army; one-twelfth was to cover the civil list of the king and his household; another twelfth was to be paid to ministers and officials; a further twelfth was to be devoted to religion and religious establishments; the last twelfth was to be utilised for *prakritya*, *i.e.*, for public works, charity, poor-relief, etc.

The departments of income and expenditure were respectively under the control of the *Sāmaharta* and the *Sannidhata*. The government accounts were audited every year in the month of *Sravana*. Kautilya refers to the possibility of intelligent misappropriation of public funds and enumerates forty different types of embezzlement. The officials were frequently transferred.

Law and Justice

Judicial literature

The earliest sources of Hindu law were the *Dharma Sutras*, attributed to the sages Gautama, Baudhayana, Vasishta and Apasthamba. These were prose works and

supposed to be explanations of the earlier Vedic or *Sruti* literature. They were composed in and around the sixth century B.C. New versions in verse of these Sutras were composed later and these were called *Dharma Sastras* to distinguish them from the earlier Sutras. The earliest of the *Dharma Sastras* was that attributed to Manu. The *Manava Dharma Sastra* (the Lawbook of Manu), better known as *Manu Smriti*, was edited probably in the second century A.D. *Dharma Sastras*, which appeared after this period, are those attributed to Vishnu, Narada and Yajnavalkya. The Lawbook of Manu was considered by later writers as an authority on Hindu law. Several jurists of the Middle Ages wrote important commentaries on the *Dharma Sastras*. Of these Vijnanesvara, Hemadri and Jimutavahana are important. Vijnanesvara, who adorned the court of Vikramaditya VI (1076-1127), the Western Chalukya of Kalayani, wrote the *Mitakshara*, a commentary on Yajnavalkya's *Dharma Sastra*. Hemadri of the fourteenth and Jimutavahana of the fifteenth centuries wrote on different aspects of civil law, the latter specialising in inheritance (*Dayabhaga*). These works have greatly influenced the law of modern India.

Administration of justice

One of the important functions of the king was to uphold *Dharma*, which might be loosely translated as the righteous conduct as explained by the scriptures or simply Sacred Law, and punish those that transgressed it. A king who did not uphold *Dharma* by means of *danda* (punishment) would be condemned to hell. Even if he delayed justice he would be born as a lizard. The divine Yama, who punished evil doers after death, was known as *Dharma-raja* and kings sometimes assumed this title. Besides *Dharma*, contract, custom and royal ordinance were also

recognised as bases of law. The totalitarian *Arthashastra* maintains that royal ordinance overrides the others while the traditional view was that *Dharma* was the dominant basis of law.

In the Mauryan period there were separate courts for civil and criminal cases. The civil court was called *Dharmasthiya* and the criminal court *Kantakasodhana* ('removal of thorns'). The king's court, presided over by the *Pradvivaka*, was the final court of appeal. Judges were to be chosen from persons above corruption, learned, religious and devoid of anger. No judge was to grant a private interview to a litigant before his case was closed. Often a court was presided over by a committee of three or four judges. The court procedure included examination and cross-examination of witnesses. The arrested person was to be tried the day after his arrest. Several court offences were recognised. Evading a straight answer to questions, production of irrelevant or false witnesses, unwarranted statements, etc. constituted contempt of court. Women, learned Brahmins, government officials, debtors, persons condemned of crimes, and persons suffering from physical defects could not act as witnesses. Torture was permitted to elicit confession in cases where there was a strong suspicion against the accused. Brahmins, the aged, the sick, the insane, children and pregnant women were not to be subjected to torture. Though not mentioned in the early texts ordeal by fire and water as a means of ascertaining guilt seems to have become popular in later times. "Specially interesting is the ordeal of the ploughshare, in which the accused man had to touch a red-hot iron ploughshare with his tongue; if it was not burned he was deemed innocent—psychologically a fairly sound test of his own confidence in the result, since if he had a guilty conscience his salivary glands would not function properly, and his tongue would be burnt."*

* Basham. *Ibid.* P. 117.
UP State Museum, Lucknow

Besides the official courts there were village, caste and guild councils which dealt with justice. In many cases minor disputes were settled by these tribunals. The legal texts fully recognise the validity of their judgments but do not describe their procedure. They fined the guilty and in extreme cases excommunicated them. Excommunication from caste or guild was regarded as a very serious penalty.

The practice of varying punishment for the same offence in accordance with the status of the person wronged (*wergeld* or bloodmoney) was recognised by the earliest texts. The early Sutras laid down, for example, that the fine for killing a *kshatriya* was 1000 cows, 100 for a *vaisya* and ten for a *sudra*, while the murder of a Brahman could not be expiated by a fine. Originally passed on to the family of the person killed the fine paid by the condemned became, in course of time, the property of the state and one of its chief sources of income. Imprisonment was a common form of punishment. The guilty were sometimes condemned to forced labour under trying conditions. Mutilation and numerous types of torture are prescribed by the texts for many crimes like theft and assault. Under the Mauryas the criminal law was harsh. The *Arthashastra* says that a man who spread false rumours or committed house-breaking was to be hanged; a traitor or one who forced entry into the king's harem, or murdered his father, mother, brother or son or committed arson was to be burnt alive; one guilty of wilful murder or cattle lifting was to be beheaded; a woman who murdered her husband or child or poisoned others was to be torn apart by oxen; a civilian who stole military supplies was to be shot to death with arrows. Sexual crimes are not so severely dealt with by the *Arthashastra* but the *Manusmriti* prescribes the death penalty for adultery and rape.

Criminal law became less severe after the period of the Mauryas owing to the spread of humanitarian and Buddhist

ideas. The *Mahabharata* raises the problem of the suffering caused to many innocent people, viz., the wife and dependents of the criminal, who is condemned to death or long imprisonment and answers it by saying that in the *Kali* age innocent people will have to suffer with the guilty in order that society may be protected from anarchy and men enabled to follow *Dharma*. In the period of the Guptas the criminal law became definitely mild. The death penalty which was so common under the Mauryas ceased to be a form of punishment under the Guptas. Fa-Hien records that it was not imposed in North India, that most crimes were punished by fines and that a second attempt at rebellion was punished by amputation of the right hand. Under Harsha, according to Hiuen Tsang, prisoners were thrown into dungeons. In the south the Cholas did not inflict cruel punishments. As pointed out earlier, a guilty man had to part with a number of cows and light perpetual lamps in the village temple. Punishment took the form of a penance imposed for the atonement of the crime.

The Hindu legal system did not recognise equality in the eye of the law in the modern sense of the term. Punishment was graduated according to the class to which the guilty belonged. The Brahmans claimed many privileges and in the Vedic period some claimed to be above law. Generally the Brahman was punished lightly, and rarely with death. The secular *Arthashastra*, however, makes no distinction and prescribes death for sedition and sanctions branding in case of certain offences. For the same offence the Kshatriya was punished more severely than the Brahman, the Vaisya more severely than the Kshatriya and the Sudra more than the Vaisya.

This as well as the practice of wergeld referred to above was justified on the ground that the upper classes were expected to lead purer lives and adhere to higher norms of conduct.

On the same ground the upper classes, in some cases, were punished more severely than the lower. Theft by a Brahman was considered a more heinous crime than that by a Sudra. Manu lays down that as fine for theft a Brahman should pay 64 times, a Kshatriya 32 times, a Vaisya 16 times and a Sudra 8 times the value of property stolen.

SECTION II

Quasi-feudalism

Subordinate or feudatory kings

The barbarians, who destroyed the Roman empire and established in its place several independent kingdoms in the Middle Ages, established a rough and ready government well-known as feudalism. The barbarian king distributed the land he conquered among his friends and comrades-in-arms taking from them an oath of allegiance and fealty. The landlord or vassal acknowledged the king as his overlord and promised to supply him with men and money when required. The vassal or tenant-in-chief in his turn distributed his own land among a number of sub-tenants owing allegiance to him and not to the king. In the same way the sub-tenant had a number of mesne-tenants under him. At the bottom of the feudal pyramid were the cultivating serfs or villeins. At every stage the relationship between the tenant and his overlord was governed by a contract. In ancient and medieval India too there were similar conditions of decentralised government under which the king had a number of feudatories under him, a feudatory having sometimes his own vassals. But unlike in medieval Europe the relationship between a vassal and his overlord was not governed in India by a contract. What has been termed "quasi-feudalism" by Basham arose in India in the following ways. (a) The Hindu king was eager to bear the proud title of emperor, *Chakravartin* or

samrat, i.e., king of kings. He undertook a tour of conquest or *digvijaya*. The defeated kings acknowledged his suzerainty, became his vassals and agreed to pay him annual tribute. Their kingdoms were not annexed with that of the conqueror; they retained their royal titles and full autonomy. (b) A king might sometimes be pleased to set up his minister, friend or favourite as his feudatory or vassal over a part of his kingdom. (c) A minister or official or provincial governor might, taking advantage of the king's weakness or distance from the capital, set himself up as a feudatory, assume royal title and issue his own coins acknowledging the supremacy of the king. He was no longer the king's official holding office at his pleasure. He was king by his own right and often stopped paying tribute after some time. (d) In the medieval period the king often paid his high officers not by cash but by delegating to them the right to collect land revenue from a village or group of villages. This right carried with it many privileges and in course of time the tax collector grew to be a chieftain.

Relations between vassal and suzerain

A system of overlordship without conquest, the lesser kings voluntarily acknowledging the supremacy of their more powerful neighbour, seems to have been considered by the classical texts as quite natural and right. The epics and the *Smṛiti* literature discouraged outright conquest. The *Arthashastra* advises a weak king to accept the overlordship of his stronger neighbour. In practice, however, overlordship was established by conquest and not by any right of natural superiority. The Hindu king was not keen on dissolving the defeated kingdoms and absorbing them into his own, for then he would not have subordinate kings, he would not be 'king of kings.' He seems to have been more particular about the appearance of overlordship than its substance.

The epics are full of court scenes of the emperor attended by several kings, scenes of rows of bejewelled turbans "glittering like the waves of the sea, as the vassals bow before their lord." Thus the vassal was not only expected to pay to his suzerain annual tribute and supply him with men and material when required but attend his court on ceremonial occasions and render him obeisance. Whenever a vassal issued a charter he was expected to mention the name of his suzerain before his own. If the suzerain was decidedly more powerful than his vassals it was open to him to demand their daughters for his harem or their sons to serve as pages, or ask them to be his ministers or courtiers or station his own agents in their capitals. If not overlordship was only nominal. Even the tribute was not received or allowed to fall into arrears. The great vassal or *Mahasamanta*, like the mighty feudal baron of medieval Europe, was a dangerous threat to the security of the king. As he had his own administration, army and forts he could, if he so wished, set at naught the authority of the king and put an end to his dynasty. In the Deccan the dynasty of the Badami Chalukyas was overthrown by their feudatories, the Rashtrakutas (745), who in their turn were overthrown by their feudatories, the Kalyani Chalukyas. In the south the Pallavas were overthrown by their feudatories the Cholas (898). The small vassal, though he assumed the title of Raja and sometimes even kept a court, was quite harmless. In any case there was in Hindu India, as in medieval Europe, constant war among king and chieftains, who regarded it as their natural sport. Consequently there were frequent periods of anarchy and numerous kingdoms and dynasties.

SECTION III

*Oligarchies and Republics**Tribal states*

When the Aryans entered India they were organized in partriarchal tribes. In course of time powerful tribal leaders made themselves kings and subdued the tribals and the lesser tribal leaders into subjection. All tribes did not succumb in this way. In the sixth century B.C., *i.e.*, in the age of the Buddha, there were four republican tribes in East India, where grew the first great Hindu kingdoms like Kosala, Avanti and Magadha. These were the Mallas of Kusinara, the Moriyas of Pippalivana, the Videhas of Mithila and the Lichchavis of Vaisali. Of these the Lichchavis were the most powerful. They resisted Ajatasatru, the war-like king of Magadha. They maintained their autonomous states till the fourth century A.D. when Chandragupta I married the Lichchavi princess Kumaradevi and annexed Vaisali with his kingdom of Magadha. The other tribes disappeared earlier. The Sakyas of Kapilavastu, in the Himalayan foothills, were a small tribe, to which the great Buddha belonged. His father Suddhodana was one of the tribal leaders. They were overthrown by a king of Kosala in the fifth century B.C.

While in the east the republican tribes had to face the opposition of powerful kingdoms they enjoyed greater security in the west, which did not witness the growth of empires. The Greek accounts of Alexander's invasion, the *Arthashastra* and the *Mahabharatha* refer to several republican tribes of this region, some of which survived till the fifth century A.D. Of these the Yaudheyas, who lived in the region immediately to the south of the Sutlej, were the most important. They have left several coins bearing the legend 'Victory to the Yaudheya tribe.' The famous Allahabad pillar inscrip-

tion of Samudragupta (330—380 A.D.) mentions nine republican tribes, who lived on the western frontier of his kingdom and paid him tribute, viz., the Malavas, the Arjunayanas, the Yaudheyas, the Madrakas, the Abhiras, the Sanakanikas, the Kakas, the Kharaparikas and the Prarjunas. The Malavas, the Malloi of the Greek accounts, lived in Malwa, the Arjunayanas in eastern Rajasthan, the Yaudheyas and the Madrakas in the Punjab and the other tribes probably in Central India south of Jhansi. These tribes, which became tributary to the Guptas, were destroyed by the Huns who overthrew the Gupta empire in the latter half of the fifth century A.D. After this date we do not hear of the republican tribes.

Republican organization

We have no detailed information about the organization of the non-monarchical tribal states. One passage in the Rig Veda refers to an assembly of kings. In the Rig Vedic period many tribes were still governed by councils of tribal chiefs, each of whom bore the title of Raja. *Sabha* and *Samiti* mentioned by the Rig Veda most probably refer to the tribal meetings, the former to a meeting of the chief men of the tribe (the council of elders) and the latter to a gathering of all free tribesmen, or perhaps of heads of families (popular assembly).

These meetings continued for sometime even under monarchies. When one tribal chief was accepted as a hereditary chief the tribal state ceased to be a republic and became a monarchy. While many tribal states became monarchies some continued to be republics. In the age of the Buddha one of the tribal leaders was elected president of the council of elders, which handled the day-to-day administrative and judicial matters. It was also a deliberative body. It is probable that the title of Raja was restricted to

such a president in this age. His office was neither hereditary nor for life. Little is known about the mode of election or the term of office of the president and the elders. There were meetings of the whole tribe on special occasions. Land was perhaps held on a feudal basis by a number of chieftains owing allegiance to the chief Raja or the elected president of the *sabha*.

Real power in a tribal state most probably lay in the hands of the oligarchic *sabha* or council of the chief tribal leaders. The strength of the state depended on the cohesion of the *sabha*. The *Arthashastra* devotes an entire chapter to explain how a king could easily overcome and annex a tribal state by sowing seeds of dissension among the tribal leaders, who would quarrel among themselves and weaken their state. We have no information regarding the powers and functions of the assembly. "In any case modern India may take legitimate pride that, though she may not have had democracies in the modern sense, government by discussion was by no means unknown in her ancient civilization." (Basham).

SECTION IV

War and Military organization

War in ancient India

It was seen above that the quasi-feudal conditions of Hindu India produced frequent war. Under the Mauryas and, on a lesser scale, under the Guptas there were empires, which united large parts of the country under one rule, but at other times India was a patchwork of numerous kingdoms and chieftaincies engaged in a ceaseless trial of strength. The ancient texts give full recognition to such a state of affairs. Almost all texts except the *Arthashastra* hail war for

glory. The *Arthashastra* refers to war as a means of gain and empire building. The texts mention three kinds of war of conquest, viz. *Dharmavijaya*, *Lobhavijaya* and *Asuravijaya*. By the first or righteous conquest, the defeated king was forced to pay homage and tribute and thus reduced to the position of a vassal. By the second or conquest for greed, the defeated king was forced to part with a large booty and also a portion of his kingdom besides being reduced to vassalage. By the third or demoniac conquest, the conquered king was dethroned and his kingdom annexed with that of the conqueror. The orthodox texts recommended the righteous conquest and looked down upon the other two with contempt. As soon as a king was established on the throne he should attack his neighbours as a matter of course and win victory and glory. It was his *dharma*. While the neighbouring king is to be regarded as the natural enemy, the neighbour's neighbour is to be treated as an ally. The purpose is clear. Two kings could join together in a temporary alliance and encircle and destroy the kingdom lying between them. In war the king and his men should follow many rules. A warrior fighting from a chariot must not attack one on horseback or on foot. A wounded soldier or one in flight asking for quarter must not be killed. A disarmed man must not be attacked with arms. Peasants, animals, particularly cows, Brahmans and non-combatants in general were not to be harmed. These rules could not always be observed. In the Mahabharata war the heroes broke the rules many times on the grounds of expediency and necessity. In any case destruction of crops to weaken the enemy was justified by the texts and hence in war the peasants as well as traders could not feel secure. Asoka annexed Kalinga after injuring or slaughtering thousands among whom were Brahmana and Sramana ascetics. The Guptas indulged in *asuravijaya* or conquest for annexation.

The above discussion will show that the Hindus were a militant people and not pacifists. Asoka alone of all kings abjured war even of the righteous type, *i.e.*, conquest for glory. As a realist, however, he kept his army, and was prepared to put down by force the wild tribesmen of hill and forest if they raided the settled parts of his empire. A stern warning against mischief makers is contained in the same edict, the Kalinga-edict, in which he abjures war.

Military organization and technique

Composition of the Army

In the early tribal state all tribesmen had to bear arms. But as kingdoms arose and as the caste system developed ideas of civic militia disappeared. The Hindu king kept a standing army, the bulk of which consisted of hereditary troops. The rest was made up of mercenaries, feudal levies supplied by the subordinate rulers, the wild tribesmen of the hills and forests, and others. The Kshatriyas were soldiers by birth and profession and they constituted the bulk of the army. From the epics and several inscriptions of the Middle Ages we learn that several high military posts were held by Brahmins. Similar posts were sometimes held by the Sudras too. Usually they fought as auxiliaries.

Divisions

Chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry were the four traditional divisions of the Hindu army. Megasthenes adds two more divisions, *viz.*, the navy and the commissariat or department of military supplies. The light two-horsed chariot, carrying the driver and the warrior, who fought with bows and arrows, remained the major fighting arm upto the Gupta period. Sometimes four-horsed chariots were also used. Chariots used in assaulting fortresses carried battering rams. After the Gupta period the chariot was used only in

transport. Each horseman carried two lances. Cavalry training and tactics were poor and the Hindu cavalry could not stand against the more efficient cavalry of Alexander and the Muslims. Great importance was attached to elephants, which were carefully trained to break up enemy ranks and smash palisades, gateways and even fortress walls. A line of elephants stationed side by side was sometimes used as a bridge to cross shallow rivers. Protected with leather armour, their tusks tipped with metal spikes and often excited with drink the elephants placed in the van of the army were expected to strike terror in the opposite ranks. Each elephant carried two or three men armed with bows and arrows, javelins and lances besides the mahout and was escorted by a small protective detachment of footmen. With all its might and awesomeness the elephant was not quite a reliable weapon. When wounded or frightened by fire it turned upon its own ranks, threw down the riders and spread panic alround. It did not help the Rajaputs to throw out the Muslims, who invaded India without the elephant arm. Though placed in the last category, the infantry was not only the most numerous wing, but the mainstay of the army. Its men were armed with bows and arrows, swords and javelins. The king always had his bodyguard. In the south they had the privilege of dining with the king and were sworn to defend his person to death. Marco Polo refers to them as "Companions of Honour." Priests and medical men followed the army. The priests offered prayers and chose the time of assault. There were separate physicians for horses and elephants. The surgeons were equipped with instruments, drugs and bandages. There were also servants, cooks and engineers who accompanied the army. Music, drums and gongs were used to enthuse the troops.

The navy consisted of fleets of ships used to transport troops and supplies along rivers. The kings of North India

had no conception of naval warfare and there was no occasion for it. Their ambition was to extend their kingdom within the country and not plant overseas colonies by conquest. The merchants did not do maritime trade. But in the south conditions were different. From very ancient times the Tamils carried on trade across the sea and in the period of the imperial Cholas there was active trade with Indonesia and China. Rajaraja I and Rajendra I (985-1044) possessed a navy, which invaded Ceylon and undertook victorious expeditions to Malaya and Sumatra. The traders of the west coast sent armed ships to protect their merchantmen against pirates.

Size

Curtius, who accompanied Alexander, says that Dhana Nanda, the last of the Nanda kings (third century B.C.), kept an army of 200,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 4,000 elephants and 2,000 chariots. From the same source we learn that Chandragupta Maurya maintained an army of 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 9,000 elephants and 2,000 chariots. At the height of his power Harsha, according to Hiuen-Tsang, maintained 60,000 elephants and 100,000 cavalry. The Chola Rajaraja I is said to have invaded the kingdom of the Eastern Chalukyas (Vengi) with an army of 900,000. Though these numbers are definitely exaggerated there is no doubt that the great Hindu kings kept a large army. It is probable that these numbers included the non-combatants. According to several texts the *Akshauni* or complete army consisted of 21,870 *pattis*. A *patti* was a mixed unit consisting of one chariot, one elephant, three horses and five foot-men. Three *pattis* made a *senamukha*, three *senamukhas* a *gulma* and so on. The *Arthashastra* mentions a *samavyuha* or legion consisting of 225 chariots, 225 elephants, 1125 horses and 3375 footmen. An army might consist of several such legions.

Organization

According to Megasthenes the six wings of the Mauryan army, viz., chariots, elephants, cavalry, infantry and commissariat were administered by thirty commissioners divided into six committees of five members each.* The king himself took the command in all major engagements. The *Arthashastra* advises him not to expose himself in the front ranks but direct operations from the rear. The *Mahasenapati* was the commander in chief and there were several *senapatis* or generals under him, each of whom commanded a contingent. Each general had under him a number of captains or *nayaks*, who commanded a regiment each. The captains of medieval India held lands, recruited their own men and had their own forts and thus formed a sort of feudal nobility. Each regiment had its own distinguishing standard. The troops of a regiment led a corporate life. In the south we hear of the troops of a regiment contributing to a fund for the maintenance of the family of a comrade killed in battle.

Weapons

The heavy long bow made of bamboo measured five or six feet. It was rested on the ground and steadied with one foot and it shot cane arrows over long distances. As a rule however, the archers in battle used the light short bow made of horn. Poisoned arrows, though condemned by the *smriti* texts, were known and used. Several kinds of swords, lances and javelins were the usual weapons of offence. The *tomara* was a special long spear used in fighting from the back of the elephant. Heavy iron clubs and battle-axes were also used. The soldiers as well as the horses and elephants

*The account of Megasthenes of Mauryan military as well as municipal administration by six committees of five members each is not confirmed by other sources.

were protected at first by armour of leather. Metallic armour, *i.e.*, coats of mail, were used in the medieval times to cover the breast and the limbs of the soldier. The head was often protected by a heavy turban rather than a metallic helmet. The cane or wooden shield covered with metal or leather was a common weapon of defence. Ballistas and battering rams were used in sieges. Incendiary weapons like fire-balls and fire-arrows were known and used though disapproved by the *Smritis* but the Machiavellian *Arthashastra* gives its wholehearted support to incendiarism in war. It gives recipes for making incendiary missiles and suggests that monkeys and birds could be employed to carry them to the enemy's camp or city.

Forts

Excavations at the sites of Pataliputra near Patna and Sisupalgarh in Orissa have thrown to light the remains of the earliest fortress walls of timber and brick respectively. According to Megasthenes the Mauryan capital, *i.e.*, Pataliputra, was well defended by a fortified wooden wall and a moat. The wall had 64 gates and 570 towers. The *Arthashastra* says that a fortified city or *durga* must be surrounded by three wide moats and a wall with numerous towers for watchmen and archers. The Yadava kings of Devagiri (thirteenth century) built a rock fort atop an inaccessible hill near their capital. The pathway cut by them to the fort through solid rock can still be seen and has been regarded as a marvel of engineering skill. The besiegers tried to make a breach with the help of elephants, ballistas and battering rams, laid underground mines or tunnels and cut off all supplies of food to the fort in the hope of starving the defenders into surrender.

The Camp

The Hindu military camp like that of the Mughals was

cumbrous. It was in fact a moving city. It included a large number of non-combatants like the harems of the king, and his noblemen, his camp followers, priests, merchants and a host of servants like washermen, cooks etc. Kamandaka, the author of the *Nitisara* (Gupta period), disapproved of women in the camp, but his advice was rarely followed. The Rashtrakuta king Amogavarsha I (814—80) was actually born in a camp. Under such conditions the army could not march fast. According to the *Arthashastra* a "good" army could march two *yojanas* per day, i.e., about ten miles, while a bad army could cover only one.

Conduct of battle

The texts do not throw much useful light on the ancient concepts of strategic warfare. The *Arthashastra*, e.g., describes in detail the religious rites to be performed before beginning a battle but says little on the actual conduct of fighting and does not suggest new or better tactics. It simply says that it would be advantageous to place the heavy infantry in the centre and the chariots, cavalry and light infantry on the wings. The elephants were generally placed along with the heavy infantry in the centre. Single combats between heroes or leaders were common and their results had a great influence on the general outcome. There was no doubt a general mingling of the rank and file but their morale very largely depended upon that of their leaders. When the general fell his men lost enthusiasm. When the king fell or even could not be seen for a time the whole army became panicky and fled. Prisoners of war were generally ransomed. Those who could not pay cash did forced labour over varying periods.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

SECTION I

Classes, Castes and Sects

The Four Great Classes

It was mentioned above that by the end of the Rig Vedic age the four great classes based on professions were not only recognised but considered as divinely ordained. In the succeeding ages the classes became castes as endogamous marriages, prohibition of inter-class dining and caste-exclusiveness became accepted social practices. A son belonged to his father's caste and was expected to follow his profession. The caste system never became completely rigid in all its aspects, but there were varying degrees of flexibility in different periods. In the medieval period there was more or less the same flexibility of the Vedic age but with the coming of the Muslims fears of miscegenation and impure contacts produced a new rigidity. However much a Hindu might break the rules of his caste to-day he cannot undo the fact that he was born in and belongs to a particular caste unless he changes his religion. Thus the caste system continues to be an important feature of Hindu society.

In the ancient period the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas were regarded as "twice-born" (*dvija*) and belonged to the higher classes. They were "twice-born" because they were supposed to be reborn (both boys and girls) during their initiation (*upanayana*), when they were invested with the sacred thread and made fit to perform the religious rites appropriate to their caste. According to Manu the duty of the Brahman is to study and teach, offer sacrifices and make and receive gifts; that of the Kshatriya is to protect

people, study and perform sacrifices; the Vaisya too must study and sacrifice, but his chief function is to carry on agriculture, trade and money lending; the Sudra must serve the higher classes. The great law-giver adds, "It is better to do one's own duty badly than another's well." The system of *varna* or class came to the south in the wake of the penetration of Aryan influences and it was established in a more rigid form than in the north as the Brahmans of the south began to follow the caste rules and rites more strictly.

The Brahmans

The professional Brahman (one possessed of divine force) was a priest, who claimed descent from the *rishis* or the great seers who composed Vedic hymns. There were priests who specialised in sacrificial ritual, priests who chanted the hymns or the *mantras*, those who did the manual work during ceremonies, and so on. Protection of the Brahmans was prescribed as one of the fundamental duties of the king, who often conferred on them tax free lands. A learned Brahman might hold the post of court priest, or eke his livelihood as the family priest of noblemen, either Kshatriyas or Vaisyas, or as a teacher of the sacred texts. A Brahman might sometimes hold land independently and cultivate it by hiring serfs. A highly respected class of Brahmans were the recluses who like the *rishis* of old, lived in forests either in groups or singly and spent their time in penance or instruction. There was also the less honoured and less fortunate Brahman, who lived in the village and amid Sudras, catering to their limited religious needs as priests and astrologers.

The Kshatriyas

The Kshatriya was the protector of the people and of the realm. Fighting and government were his main func-

tions. Foreign invaders, who settled down in India, like the Sakas, Pahlavas and the Kushanas, were in course of time recognised as Kshatriyas. The Rajaputs, who proudly called themselves Kshatriyas, were largely descended from such invaders and they even performed purificatory ceremonies to get themselves recognised as Aryans. The king belonged to this class. There was the inevitable struggle between the Brahman and the Kshatriya for precedence. The legend of Parasurama "must contain a recollection of fierce strife between the two classes in pre-Buddhist times." Parasurama was a Brahman. He was the son of Jamadagni, who was robbed by the wicked king Kartavirya. When Parasurama killed Kartavirya, the son of the latter killed Jamadagni. In rage Parasurama (Rama with the Axe) destroyed all the males of the Kshatriya class. In the period of the great Hindu kings (the Mauryas and the Guptas) the Brahmins retained their superiority in theory but in practice their claims of precedence, honour and worship did not go unchallenged, their pretensions sometimes making them the objects of ridicule.

The Vaisyas

While the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas maintained more or less an equal status the Vaisyas came far below them in rank. After the Vedic age the Vaisyas left agriculture to the Sudras and concentrated on different forms of trade. As dealers in goods they acquired expert knowledge of jewels, metals, cloth, perfumes etc. As they acquired wealth their importance in society increased. The wealthiest of them were respected by kings and enjoyed their confidence. They made many donations to religious causes and greatly contributed to the success of Buddhism. They favoured Buddhism specially as it refused to accept the tall claims of the Brahmins.

The Sudras

The Sudras were not "twice-born"; for them there was no initiation into full Aryan status. The name Sudra is given by the Mahabharata to a non-Aryan tribe subdued by the Aryans. As mentioned already, the conquered Dasyus and those Aryans who had intermarried with them were relegated to this class. According to the scriptures those of the higher classes who did not do their specific duties and thus violated their *dharma* were to be considered as Sudras. A Sudra could not read or hear the Vedas but the Epics and the Puranas were open to him. His duty was to wait upon the masters, *i.e.*, those belonging to the higher classes and do their bidding. He had no rights. A Brahman, who killed a Sudra, had just to do a penance (*prayaschitta*). Though this was his position according to the law of Manu, the Sudra during and after the period of the Mauryas, is mentioned as a cultivator or trader. Many a Sudra became famous as an ardent follower of the simple and devotional faiths of the Middle Ages.

The "untouchables"

The "untouchables" of a later day were really outcasts. Those who followed unclean and despicable occupations like hunting and dealing in flesh, attendants in the cremation grounds, fishermen, leather workers, sweepers and scavengers came below the Sudras and had to live outside the pale of Aryan society. In the Gupta period the *chandala* who dealt in flesh had to announce his approach by striking the ground with his stick. They were sometimes called *Panchama*, *i.e.*, belonging to the fifth class but most texts do not approve this and are not prepared to consider them as members of society. They could not enter temples nor perform any religious rite.

The idea behind the ancient system of classes was that

each man had a place in society ordained for him and that it was his most sacred function to perform the duties connected with it. This idea, well-known as the *varna(srama) dharma*, forms the central core of the teaching of *Bhagavad Gita*.

Flexibility of Classes

Apad-dharma

The theory of *varnasrama dharma* meant, so far as the *varnas* or classes were concerned, that the members of each class should stick to their professions, but the *Smritis* provided, at the same time, for *apad dharma* or "duty when in distress." They carefully defined what a man may rightly do when he cannot earn a living by following the professions of his class. A Brahman, e.g., could trade in many articles except animals, weapons, liquor etc. He could not engage in agriculture or moneylending. A Kshatriya under similar circumstances could become a merchant or a craftsman. A Vaisya could do cattle-rearing and farming. Such provisions of the ancient texts tended to keep the class system flexible.

Anuloma marriages

Though the *Smritis* permitted certain flexibility in rules regarding crafts they generally discouraged the mixing up of class (*varna-sankara*) through inter-marriages. They warned the kings not to permit such a mixture, which they feared would increase in the degenerate age of *Kali*. But actually there were many instances of inter-class marriages in the ancient period and the legal literature of the day had to recognise some forms of them. Manu, Baudhayana, Vasishta and others (authors of legal texts in the *Smriti* literature) permitted *anuloma* marriages, i.e., men of a higher class taking wives from the class immediately below them. If a Brahman married a Kshatriya wife the offspring was regarded as Brahman; the marriage was hypergamous or *anulo-*

ma, i.e., "in the direction of the hair." If a Kshatriya took a Vaisya wife, the offspring would be Kshatriya. The same did not apply to a Vaisya marrying a Sudra woman. His offspring was a Sudra. In other words, the rule of *anuloma* marriages applied only to the "twice-born" classes. A Brahman taking a Sudra wife himself became a Sudra and his offspring were to be considered as outcastes. The law-givers mentioned above refused to recognise hypogamous marriages, i.e., men of a lower class taking wives from a higher class. These were considered improper or *pratiloma* ("against the direction of the hair"). The offspring of *pratiloma* marriages were to be considered as outcastes. A Kshatriya could not take a Brahman wife; a Vaisya could not take a Kshatriya wife. A Brahman woman accepting a Sudra husband was considered as most heinous. In practice, however, the children of Kshatriya fathers and Brahman mothers and of Vaisya fathers and Kshatriya mothers were respected. The *sutas* or charioteers belonged to the former class and the *magadhas* or bards to the latter. Mixed marriages became uncommon as the caste system became rigid in the Middle Ages as a result of Muslim contact.

Multiplication of castes and sects

The four great classes or castes or *varnas* of the Vedic age multiplied in the course of centuries and at present more than 3,000 castes are enumerated. Some authors would apply the word caste (meaning clan, first used by the Portuguese in India in the sixteenth century to denote the Hindu social group) only to the numerous professional, local or religious sects, or *jatis* of the modern period e.g., the priest, the goldsmith, weaver, hill tribes, forest tribes, the Lingayats, etc. Several attempts have been made to explain how the four *varnas* developed into thousands of *jatis* in the course of centuries. The traditional view is that the four great classes

multiplied into thousands of castes by the twin processes of intermarriages, which gave rise to mixed castes, and subdivision of each caste into numerous sects. *Anuloma* and *Pratiloma* marriages actually produced new castes. The class of Brahmins subdivided itself into 1,800 sects and sub-sects due to differences of custom etc. This cannot be accepted as a full explanation of the proliferation of castes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The main cause of increase in the number of castes was the growth of trades and professions and this process began even in the later Vedic age. Buddhist sources speak of some professions like Brahmins, potters and hunters living apart in separate villages. They also speak of separate quarters in towns for different professions. The rules regarding marriage, dining and profession were applied to the narrower groups just as they were applied to the original classes or *varnas*. Organization of professions in guilds, the coming of new and newer crafts, specialisation, regional and local settlements, the introduction of new racial elements as a result of successive invasions of foreigners, rise of new religious faiths, and the growth of new schools of philosophy have all contributed to the perpetuation of castes in a vast country of great distances, different climates, complexions, dress, social habits, and languages. While the number of castes recognised all over the country is very few the castes and sub-castes, which are purely regional and local, are too numerous to mention and "defy all attempts by census officers at accurate enumeration." It is ironical that those seers, who preached in the late Middle Ages, against the caste system, themselves became founders of new religions and castes, e.g., Nanak, the first *guru* of the Sikhs.*

* While caste divided society horizontally *gotra* divided it vertically. It was at first adopted by Brahmins and later copied by the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. All Brahmins were believed to be descended from seven or eight *rishis* of old after whom the *gotras* were named: Kasyapa,

Four stages of life : Varnasrama dharma

The Hindu conception of the law of society and the individual was called *varnasrama dharma*. Just as Aryan society was divided into four *varnas* or classes the individual's life was divided into four stages or *asramas*. It may be presumed that the *asrama* concept came later than that of *varna*, probably in the days of the primacy of Buddhism which laid a great stress on renunciation. The first *asrama* was that of a *brahmacharin* or student, i.e., the period between the initiation (*upanayana*) and marriage. The *brahmacharin* lived a strictly celibate and austere life at the home of his *guru* or teacher. After completing a course in Vedic studies he returned to his parents and was married. As a householder or *grahastha* he performed the various rituals and ceremonies in the company of his wife (*dharma patni*) in accordance with the injunctions of the *Grihya sutras*. At the close of middle age, when his son had begot a son he left his home and lived in the forest the life of a hermit (*vanaprastha*) losing himself in penance and meditation. He could take his wife with him and live in a hut. When he became very old, when his soul became thoroughly free of all things material, he left his hermitage and became a *sannyasin* or ascetic. While the idea of *vanaprastha asrama* was retirement to help meditation and doing penance, *sannyasa* meant complete renunciation. The *sannyasi* was a homeless wanderer. His only possessions were a staff, a bowl and a few rags. He began a new life and even assumed a new name.

It is clear that the series of four *asramas* pointed to an

Vasishta, Bhrigu, Gautama, Bharadwaja, Atri, Viswamitra and Agastya. Other names were included in course of time. The *gotras* are exogamous and are hence of primary importance in connection with marriage. Kshatriyas and Vaisyas generally adopted the *gotras* of their family priests. Numerous medieval inscriptions mention the *gotra* of Vaisya donors.

ideal rather than actual practice at any period. Many did not pass beyond the stage of *grahastha*. Yet the four stages of life were regarded as the ideal to be followed and men were not wanting who made a serious attempt to pass through them in order to attain salvation.

SECTION II

Individual, Family and Social Relations

The Early Samskaras

The *Dharmasastras* and the *Grihya Sutras* lay down about 40 *samskaras* or personal ceremonies to be performed in the course of the life of an individual. All the ceremonies were common to the "twice born" classes. The *garbhadana* ceremony was performed after marriage to promote conception, the *pumsavana* to procure a male child and the *simantonnayana* for the safety of the child in the womb. After child-birth the parents were ritually impure for ten days, at the close of which they performed a purificatory rite and the child was given a name. The child's first feeding or *annaprasana* ceremony was attended with recitation of vedic verses and oblations of ghee in fire (*homa*). The pious rite of tonsure (*cudakarma*) leaving only the top knot was performed in the third year of a boy. In the case of a Brahman the top knot was never to be cut throughout his life. The ear-piercing ceremony and that of commencement of learning the alphabets were less important. The education of the child, which usually began in the fifth year, was entrusted to tutors in rich families, while the poor children were entrusted to village schools, attached to temples. Boys and girls were given the rudiment of the three R's.

Real education, which in ancient India meant Vedic studies, commenced with the great rite of *upanayana*, which

was to be performed at the age of eight in the case of the Brahman boy, eleven in the case of a Kshatriya and twelve in the case a Vaisya. The rite consisted of investiture of the boy with the *Yajnopavita* or sacred thread, which was to be worn throughout life, and with it *brahmacharya* began. The first lesson which the *brahmacharin* learnt from his *guru* was the performance of the prayer-ritual called *sandhya* every morning, noon and evening. It included sipping and sprinkling of water, regulation of breathing, offering libations of water to the Sun and recitations of the *gayatri*, a hymn of the Rig Veda addressed to the old solar God *Savitur*. The *guru* taught his students recitation of the Vedic texts in proper metre. They were recited from memory again and again and their meanings explained. Besides the Vedas the students were taught the six Vedangas, viz., Shiksha or Pronunciation, Kalpa or Ritual, Vyakarana or Grammar, Nirukta or Etymology, Chhandas or Metre and Jyotisha or Astronomy. Mathematics, the different systems of philosophy, medicine and secular literature were also taught. This curriculum, though common to all, applied in practice to the Brahman boys. Princes and sons of noblemen were trained in fighting and government while boys of the lower orders learned their trade from their fathers. Education of a more organized type in universities is dealt with separately at the end of this chapter.

Marriage

At the end of his studies, which lasted about twelve years, the *brahmacharin* returned home, took a ritual bath and became a *snataka* ("one who has bathed"). His austerity ended and he could lead a normal worldly life. At the *samavarthana* or the "home coming ceremony" he wore fine clothes and jewellery. The *snataka* was expected to marry without undue delay. Usually the parents chose a

girl belonging to the same class and caste but of a different *gotra*. According to the *Smritis* the girl should be married before puberty and the boy should be atleast twenty. The ideal age was twenty-four for the boy and eight for the girl. The low age of marriage for girls was apparently never strictly adhered to. The heroines of ancient Indian fiction and drama are full grown before they marry. Medical authorities like Susruta state that the best children are born to mothers of over sixteen. In any case child marriage, *i.e.*, marriages of small boys and girls, which became a common practice in the Middle Ages, is unknown to the *Smritis*. A girl was generally married before puberty. Monogamy was the rule but polygamy was not forbidden. It was common among kings and nobles. If the first wife was barren or did not produce a son a man could take a second wife and so on.

Eight types of marriages are recognized by the texts. (1) The *Brahma* marriage was that of a girl given by her father with dowry to a man of the same class. (2) The *Daiva* marriage was that of a daughter of a householder, who gave her to a priest of sacrifices as his fee. (3) According to the *Arsha* marriage the father gave his daughter after obtaining a nominal bride-price in the shape of a cow and a bull. (4) The *Prajapatya* marriage was one by which the father neither gave dowry nor demanded a bride-price. All these four forms were approved by the sacred law and were indissoluble religious marriages. The following four were disapproved and were not attended with any religious rite and hence not indissoluble. (5) The *Gandharva* marriage was one solemnized by the two parties meeting direct, often clandestinely, and plighting truthful love. In the epics we hear of the bride choosing her husband from an assembly of princes invited by her father. By this method of "self-choice" or *swayamvara* Damayanti and Sita chose their husbands. This practice was common in royal families. *Swayamvara* was

often followed by a religious marriage. (6) When a man purchased his bride from her father it was called *Asura*. (7) *Rakshasa* marriage was marriage by capture and was common among the warrior class especially the Rajaputs. (8) *Pisacha* marriage was forced liaison with a girl while asleep, drunk or otherwise unconscious. This repulsive type was disapproved even for the lower classes.

The *Brahma* was the normal form of marriage. The bride's father besides paying the dowry bore the expenses of the marriage. The main rules of the marriage ceremony laid down by the Rig Veda and the Smritis continue to be followed to this day. The bride's father welcomed the bridegroom's party of friends and relatives and offered them *madhuparka*, an auspicious drink of honey and curds. The bride and bridegroom entered separately a specially erected pavilion and sat on either side of a curtain held by priests. With the chanting of mantras the curtain was removed and the couple saw each other often for the first time. The bride's father formally offered her to the bridegroom, who promised to be true and faithful to his wife. Offerings of ghee and rice were made in the sacred fire. Taking the bride by her hand the groom led her round the fire, after which she placed her foot on a millstone. Then the couple took seven steps together, the bride treading on a small heap of rice at each step (*sapta pati*). With this the main marriage rite was over. The practice of the groom tying the *mangala-sutra* or *thali*, as it is known in the south, came later. The newly married couple now moved from the bride's house to that of the groom, where further sacrifices to the sacred fire were made. At the end of the ceremonies they were shown the Pole Star, a symbol of steadfastness. Consummation of marriage was allowed after three days. As a house-holder or *grahastha* the young man devoted himself to the four ends of life, viz., *dharma* or religious merit

acquired by following the *smritis*, *artha* or wealth acquired honestly, *kama* or worldly pleasures and *moksha* or salvation.

Death : Funeral ceremonies

Both birth and death were considered impure and were followed by periods by pollution. The mourners were ritually impure. They avoided close contact with outsiders. They must not shave or worship. They slept on the ground and observed some restrictions of diet. The corpse was carried to the cremation ground by the mourners soon after death and cremated. The son and near relatives of the dead circumambulated the pyre anti-clockwise, bathed in the nearest river or tank and returned home. The day after cremation the charred bones were collected and thrown into a sacred river like the Ganges. Literature often refers to cremation grounds haunted by wild animals and containing numerous putrefying corpses. It is quite possible that many corpses were simply abandoned to the wild beasts as everyone could not afford a cremation.

After death a man became a *preta* or ghost unable to proceed to the Other World or take a new birth. To make the path easy for him the son of the deceased offered for ten days after cremation libations of water and rice-balls (*pinda*). At the conclusion of the rites several gifts were made, which enabled the *preta* to proceed on its journey to the world of the dead with greater ease and speed.

Every year the death day was marked by the performance, by the son of the deceased, of a rite called *sraddha* often regarded as the most important and sacred for the householder. In the course of the ceremony *pinda* was offered not only to the immediate ancestor but to three generations of ancestors.

The joint family

The ancient Hindu family was a joint family. Sons, daughters and their families lived under one roof and owned immovable property in common. The father was the head of the family and administrator of the joint property. Inheritance of property was patriarchal except in Malabar, where it was matriarchal or matrilinear, i.e., the property passed on to the daughter but not the son. The joint family might grow very big as it sometimes included grandchildren and their families, a host of uncles, cousins and nephews, servants, dependents and serfs and in some Brahman families a concourse of students too. The big joint family broke up into small joint families when the pater familias died or when he became a *sannyasin*. The sons divided the common property, each son becoming a pater familias in his turn. Under the Mitakshara system the sons could effect partition by common agreement even before the death or *sannyasa* of the father if the latter was mentally unsound or too old to manage the property or had fallen on evil ways or had become incurably diseased.

As in most ancient societies the family and not the individual was considered as the unit. Of all the *samskaras* the *śraddha* was the most sacred rite which bound the members together. The sons, grandsons and great-grandsons joined together in the rite and participated in its benefits. "Śraddha defined the family those who were entitled to participate in the ceremony were 'co-pindas' (*Sapinda*), members of the family group." The joint system led to a deep sense of family solidarity and gave a measure of security to its members but allowed nepotism and indolence. The never-do-well cousin and the good-for-nothing uncle lived in as much comfort as the hard working young son or grandson.

The pater familias stood in relation to his family as the king to his subjects. Though the Puranas give instances of the father abandoning or sacrificing a son in fulfilment of a vow, the early texts do not concede absolute rights to him. While permitting parricide in self-defence, the *Arthashastra* says that killing a son is one of the most heinous forms of murder. While Apastamba forbids the giving away in gift or selling a son, Vasishta and Gautama allow them. So far as the family property was concerned the father was only the trustee or manager and not absolute owner. While the legal text called *Mitakshara* ('Summary') says that the sons and grandsons have a right in the family property even before the death of the father, the text called *Dayabhaga* says that the sons and grandsons obtain rights only after the death of the father, who, however, has no right to give away his property to the detriment of his descendants. Partition of the family property, in other words, is possible before the death of the father according to *Mitakshara* while it is forbidden by the *Dayabhaga*. Though these texts belong to the Middle Ages it may be presumed that they speak of much earlier practices. Individual earnings and gifts were recognised in the Middle Ages though Manu says that the earnings of a son or wife or serf belong to the head of the family. It is clear that the father had greater rights in earlier times.

Women

Legal position, property

According to the texts the legal position of a woman was always that of a dependent (minor-at-law). The unmarried daughter was under the control of her parents, the wife of her husband, and the widow of her sons. The wergeld of a woman, however highborn she might be, was that of a Sudra. Though a dependent a woman might possess her own property (*stridhana*) in the shape of jewellery. Accord-

ding to the *Arthashastra* her property was not to exceed 2,000 silver panas. The excess, if any, was to be held by her husband as a trustee. The *stridhana* passed on to the daughter and not to the son. Thus "the property rights of women, limited though they were, were greater than in many other ancient civilizations."

Education, freedom of movement

In the Vedic age girls were not prohibited from studying the scriptures. Some Vedic hymns are ascribed to women (Ghosa and Lopamudra). Gargi was a learned lady, who attended the discourses of Yajnavalkya and asked him such searching questions that he had to reply, "Gargi, you mustn't ask too much, or your head will drop off." Maitrayi was another who plied him with questions. When the *Dharmasastras* came to be written, i.e., in the Gupta period, the Vedas were no longer accessible to women. They could not become ascetics. But the Buddhist orders never closed their doors to women. Secular literature, however, was not denied to Hindu ladies. Many poems in the ancient Tamil anthologies were by women. Avvaiyar, the well-known poetess, belonged to the age of the great Tamil classics. The heroines of classical Samskrit dramas composed songs, wrote letters, and were well-versed in the arts of singing, dancing and painting. In the Middle Ages these arts were considered disreputable.

The women of ancient India enjoyed more freedom than their sisters in the Middle Ages but still it was not unrestricted. Royal women lived in the *antapurah* and were closely guarded. They could not leave the palace as they liked. But they attended courts without veils and talked with outsiders or messengers properly attended. Women of lesser rank often went to attend temples or festivals without any servant accompanying. Classical Tamil literature refers to clandestine meetings between the hero and heroine. The

Gandharva marriage, recognised by the Sanskrit texts, refers to the same practice. Once married a woman lost most of her freedom. According to the *Arthashastra* if a woman "leaves her home without her husband's permission to visit another woman she is to be fined six panas ; if she visits a man the fine is twelve ; if she goes on such errands by night the fine is double. If she leaves the house while her husband is asleep or drunk the fine is twelve panas." The home was her right place and her function was to attend to the needs of the menfolk and children. Wifely loyalty and obedience were idolised and a wife was to worship her husband as a god like Sita and Savitri even though, according to Manu, he had no good points at all. The husband on his part, was to adore his wife, cherish her with love and keep her well provided and cared for, for according to the *Mahabharatha* "the wife is half the man, the best of friends, the root of the three ends of life, and of all that will help him in the other world.....A man aflame with sorrow in his soul, or sick with disease, finds comfort in his wife, as a man parched with heat finds relief in water."

Widows : Sati

In early times, *i.e.*, before the Christian era, widow re-marriage seems to have been fairly common. The *Arthashastra* as well as the legal texts attributed to Narada and Parasara permit re-marriage of widows. As in most ancient societies *e.g.*, the Jews, the practice of levirate or *niyoga* by which a sonless widow could have a son by her dead husband's brother was also known to ancient Hindu society. But these practices became in the early centuries of the Christian era *infra dig* and pronounced *kalivarjya* (prohibited in the *kali* age). The lawbook of Manu (Gupta age) roundly declares : "Nowhere is a second husband permitted to respectable women."

The *Dharmasastras* prescribed a hard ascetic life for the widow. She had to renounce all luxuries, sleeping on the ground and eating one meal a day. She should not wear coloured garments. She should undertake and fulfill a number of vows and penances for the sake of the welfare of her departed husband's soul. She was further regarded as inauspicious, unlucky and her appearance an ill omen. It was thought commendable for a *sati* or true and virtuous woman to die along with her husband. The practice of burying or burning the wives, attendants and horses of a dead man especially if he were a prince or nobleman, was known to the ancient peoples of Egypt and China and the kings of Ur in Mesopotamia. Some early Aryan tribes seem to have followed a similar practice. It may be presumed that the Rig Vedic Aryans had discontinued it and to them it was only a memory. A funeral hymn of the Rig Veda dealing with the cremation rites says that before the dead man was burnt his widow was asked to lie by his side for a while and a bow placed in his hand and later removed.* However the practice crept in and the Greek accounts of Alexander's invasion refer to the self-immolation of the *sati*. The epics and *puranas* give a few examples. The first *sati* memorial stone is found at Eran, near Saugor (Madhya Pradesh) and belongs to the sixth century.

In this and the succeeding centuries the practice known as *sati* became more and more common particularly among the warrior class. In the Middle Ages and early modern period the system ceased to be completely voluntary and prestige as well as social and family pressure made it obligatory on all high caste widows, including child widows, to be burnt on the pyre of their dead husbands. The practice was banned by the British.

* Basham, Ibid, p 187

Prostitution

The religious texts of ancient India, which throw considerable light on contemporary society, viz., the *Smritis* warn the householder, and particularly the Brahman, against the company of a prostitute. The *Dharmasastras* of Manu and others place the harlot, the thief and the gambler in the same class and declare that a Brahman who cultivated the company of a prostitute should perform vigorous penances. Gautama declared that a murderer of a prostitute incurred no sin. The secular *Arthasastra*, however, shows that prostitution was recognised by the state. It suggests the appointment of a superintendent of prostitutes and the collection of two days' earnings from each prostitute as tax. This and other works on statecraft, as also Magasthenes, refer to the importance of keeping a close watch on the brothels, for security purposes and for the same reason enlisting their services as spies or assistants to spies. The *Kamasutra* attributed to the sage Vatsyayana and compiled in the Gupta period or slightly earlier, which gives detailed instructions on the courtship of a newly married bride by her husband, was also intended as a guide-book for the sophisticated townsman who had his mistress. Literature contains numerous references to the accomplished courtesan.

Vesya or *Ganika* was the word used to denote the public woman of the town. There were of course different types of prostitutes. The well known prostitute of literature was not only beautiful but wealthy and accomplished. She was not always a vamp. Vasantasena, the heroine of the *Mrichchakatika*, remains faithful to the Brahman, Charudatta, through thick and thin and ultimately becomes his second wife. The *Kamasutra* and other authorities on erotics say that the courtesan must be accomplished in "the sixty-four arts," which included not only music and dancing but

such diverse arts as painting, garland-making, dress-making, cooking, sorcery, composition of riddles and puzzles, writing in codes, archery, carpentry, logic etc. Ambapali, a courtesan of Vaisali and famous in Buddhist literature, was an accomplished lady. She was so wealthy and versatile that she moved with princes on equal terms. The Buddha is said to have accepted her invitation to dine in preference to that of the elders of Vaisali. Finally she became a Buddhist nun.

The courtesans, who attended on the king in his court, were paid servants and had specific duties to perform. Under instructions from the king they sometimes attended on the noblemen of the court. They came in rank, probably, below the members of the royal harem or *antapurah* who were supposed to be on a par with the chief queen, though not married to the king. It was not always easy to draw a line between the members of the *antapurah* and attendants of the court. In the Middle Ages it became a rule for a Hindu king or chieftain to maintain a harem. The idea that the God in the temple like a king kept a court attended by courtesans besides ministers developed in the Middle Ages. The courtesans of the temple were daughters of prostitutes or those of ordinary citizens given usually in childhood as offerings to temples. They danced and sang in the temple courtyard or in processions during festivals. Their duties were specified and they were often paid in kind from the income of the temple lands. Temple prostitution was known to some ancient civilizations e.g., that of Babylonia, but was unknown as an institution in the age of *Smritis*, though an early Prakrit inscription, ascribable to the late Maurya period, mentions Sutanuka, "the slave girl of the God," (*devadasi*). The *devadasis* appear in large numbers in the medieval south and are mentioned in numerous charters and inscriptions both as donors and donees and evidently occupied a respectable position. Though the

system has now disappeared worship is still offered to divine and idolised hetaerae.

Education

The education of the individual student after the ceremony of initiation or *upanayana* has already been referred to. The young boy sought out his teacher and lived with him in his home or a sylvan *asrama* until his education was complete. He paid no fee but only made a present to his *guru* while taking leave, usually a cow. But there were in ancient India famous educational centres or "university towns" as was the case in medieval Europe. Famous examples are Takshasila, Nalanda, Banaras and Kanchi. Takshasila, in the north-west, was the oldest university and it provided instruction in the Vedas, grammar, logic, mathematics, medicine and astronomy. Panini, the grammarian of the fourth century B.C., Kautilya, the author of the *Arthashastra*, and Charaka, an authority on Indian medicine, were among the alumni of Takshasila. Banaras in the north and Kanchi in the south were great centres of Sanskrit learning. While Takshasila was famous for its secular studies, Banaras was noted for its religious teachers. In the sacred city of Kasi there lived a number of Brahmana pandits well versed in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Brahman scholars from all over the country flocked to it to add to their knowledge of the Vedanta.

Jain as well as Buddhist education centred in the monastery. The most famous Buddhist monastery, which developed into a true university, was that of Nalanda in Bihar. Founded in the Gupta age it was working in full swing in the days of Harsha (606—647 A.D.) as testified to by the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, who stayed in the monastery for several months. Originally a mango grove, the monastery grew to be a giant six-storeyed building, thanks to the

lavish gifts and endowments made by several kings. Harsha donated 200 villages for its upkeep. It accommodated 10,000 students (3,000 according to I-tsing, another Chinese traveller), most of whom were Buddhist monks. It had won international reputation and students from the Far East (particularly from Indonesia) came and stayed there for years. Boarding, lodging and even clothing were free. The famous chief monks or presidents of the university were Silabhadra and Dharmapala. The latter hailed from Kanchi. There were 1510 professors, according to Hiuen-Tsang, both juniors and seniors, who "admonished each other, day and night, mutually helping to perfection." The subjects taught were both religious and secular, Buddhist and Hindu—Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism, Vedas, logic, grammar, yoga, medicine, astronomy, art and iconography. There were lectures, discussions and researches. Entrance tests and periodical examinations were conducted. The medium of instruction was Sanskrit. There was also a big library. Time was kept by the clepsydra or waterclock. The monastery was destroyed by the Muslims in the last years of the twelfth century.

Hindu monasticism developed in the Middle Ages. Several *mutts*, presided over by *sannyasins* of different faiths and philosophies became centres of religious instruction.

CHAPTER 6

EVERYDAY LIFE IN ANCIENT INDIA

In this chapter will be considered the details of the daily life of men in the villages and towns of ancient India : village and town life, amusements, clothes and ornaments, food and drink, economic life, trade, etc.

SECTION I

The Daily Round of Social Life

The village

If today India is a land of villages, 82 percent of the population living in villages, she must have been even more so in ancient times. What was the population of ancient India? Perhaps it will never be known. On very slender evidence it has been calculated that the population of medieval India was between 100 and 140 millions. That of ancient India must have been still less. Whatever it was we may be sure that the bulk of it lived in the villages, which were, however, fewer in number than now. There were more forests and jungle tracts and more wild animals. The ancient village was usually surrounded by a wall or stockade to keep out wild beasts and robbers. A number of huts clustering round a well made a village. Near the well was an open space with a few trees. A small building served both as a rest house for travellers and a club or centre of social life. The place of the club was taken by the village temple, which appeared during and after the Gupta period.

Most villagers were small peasants, each cultivating his land with the help of his family. There were a few big owners, who let out their lands to cultivating tenants in

return for one half of the produce. There were also landless labourers, who worked for hire on land and in various jobs.

The villagers lived a vigorous corporate life. The Buddhist legends refer to villagers digging tanks, felling trees and woods in order to lay roads, removing with crowbars the boulders which lay across the highways, building a village hall or embankment, doing charity, etc. We have already referred to the work of the elected council of Uttaramerur, a Brahman village of the Chola kingdom. The quiet life of a village was occasionally thrown out of gear by famine to which there are some references in ancient Indian literature. Hardship was sometimes caused to villagers by extortionate tax-collectors. The Buddhist Jataka tales mention whole villages being evacuated by their inhabitants on this ground. Irrigation works, both canals and reservoirs, were undertaken by kings, the most famous example being the Girnar dam (Kathiawar) excavated by Chandragupta and improved by Asoka. The Cholas, Bhoja Paramara of Dhar and Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagar excavated big tanks for irrigation purposes.

The Town

Houses and Town-life

As early as the sixth century B.C., i.e., in the age of the Buddha, there were a few towns in North India, e.g., Rajagriha, Sravasti, Champa, Saketa, Kasi and Kausambi, the last two being the most famous. Pataliputra, the capital of the Mauryas, according to Megasthenes, was a long narrow city, nine miles by one and a half stretching along the banks of the Ganges. Thanesar, Mathura, Kanauj, Ayodhya, Ujjain, Kanchi and Madurai were famous cities in the age of the Guptas and Harsha. The great Hindu city of the late medieval period was Vijayanagar, which according to the Portuguese traveller Paes, was larger and more populous than

Rome.* For a knowledge of the city and city life in ancient India we depend mainly on literature, sculpture and painting. Excavations made at Patna (Pataliputra), Takshasila and Sisupalgarh throw some light on the plan of the town.

It was not unusual for a king to build a new capital for himself. Bimbisara built Rajagriha and Ajatasatru Pataliputra. When a new city was thus built there was much scope for town-planning. The *Arthashastra* recommends a square plan divided into square sectors by two sets of three main parallel roads each, one running north to the other east to west. The palace and the temple occupied the south and the centre. The fragments of columns excavated at Patna and the discoveries at other sites mentioned above are too meagre to help a reconstruction. The palace was a magnified and glorified version of the house of the wealthy. It was also fortified. Three storeyed houses built of stone and brick were common. Literature mentions seven storeyed houses too. Down to the Gupta period most houses were built with high barrel-vaulted roofs; later on the barrel vaults gave place to flat terraces, so that the inmates might sleep on them during hot summer nights. Each flat had windows and balconies overlooking the street, often screened with lattices, so that the ladies of the household might see without being seen. The ground-plan of a house usually was a central courtyard surrounded by verandahs and rooms. The nobleman's house as well as the palace had a garden or park attached to it in which the inmates rested during the hot part of the day. Literature mentions flower-parks, pavilions, *kridasailas* ("artificial hillocks") fountains, swings, flower beds and swimming pools attached to or forming part of house-

* The seven sacred cities of ancient India according to tradition were Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Hardwar), Kasi, Kanchi, Ujjayini and Dvaravati (Dwaraka).

gardens. In his drama, the *Malavikagnimitra*, Kalidasa mentions the *variyantra* or "water-machine," which was "a sort of revolving spray" and which cooled the air in the hot season. The favourite flowering trees and creepers were the *ashoka*, the *kadamba*, the *kimsuka*, the *champaka* and varieties of jasmine. The most beloved flower and the subject of much poetic analogy was the lotus of white or reddish hue. The people of lesser ranks lived in smaller houses with the barrel-vaulted roof or covered by tiles. The very poor lived in mud huts covered by thatch. There were public tanks, parks and groves. In his edicts Asoka says that he planted groves for the recreation of man and beast. Regarding civic welfare the *Arthashastra* recommends the provision of drains to remove surface water, fines on those who block the public drains and those who leave rubbish in the streets and suggests some precautions against fire. Every house was to keep ready elementary fire-fighting equipment.

Maduraikkanji ("Garland of Madurai"), a long and beautiful poem composed in honour of the Pandya, Nedunjeliyan, and one of the ten idylls (*Pattuppattu*), belonging to the classical Sangam Age (the first few centuries of the Christian era), contains "undoubtedly the most remarkable description of an ancient Indian city". Basham gives the following summary of the description of the city of Madurai contained in the above poem, "which has a realism rare in the literature of the North."*

"It is a day of festival and the city is gay with flags, some presented by the king to commemorate brave deeds, flying over the homes of captains, and others waving over the shops which sell the gladdening toddy. The streets are broad rivers of people, folk

* Basham, *Ibid.* p. 203-4.

of every race, buying and selling in the market place or singing to the music of wandering minstrels.

A drum beats, and a royal procession passes down the street, with elephants leading, to the sound of the conchs. A refractory beast breaks his chain, and tosses like a ship in an angry sea until he is again brought to order. Chariots follow, with prancing horses and fierce foot-men.

Meanwhile stall-keepers ply their trade, selling sweet-cakes, garlands of flowers, scented powder and betel quids. Old women go from house to house selling nosegays and trinkets to the women folk. Noblemen drive through the streets in their chariots, their gold-sheathed swords flashing, wearing brightly-dyed garments and wreaths of flowers. From balconies and turrets the many jewels of the perfumed women who watch the festival flash in the sunlight.

The people flock to the temples to worship to the sound of music, laying their flowers before the images and honouring the holy sages. Craftsmen work in their shops—men making bangles of conch shell, gold-smiths, cloth-dealers, coppersmiths, flower-sellers, vendors of sandalwood, painters and weavers. Food-shops busily sell their wares—greens, jack-fruit, mangoes, sugar candy, cooked rice and chunks of cooked meat.

In the evening the city prostitutes entertain their patrons with dancing and singing to the sound of the lute (*yal*), so that the streets are filled with music. Drunken villagers, up for the festival, reel in the roadways, while respectable women make evening visits to the temples with their children and friends, carrying lighted lamps as offerings. They dance in the temple

courts, which are clamorous with their singing and chatter.

At last the city sleeps—all but the goblins and ghosts who haunt the dark, and the bold housebreakers, armed with rope ladders, swords and chisels, to break through the walls of mud houses. But the watchmen are also vigilant, and the city passes the night in peace.

Morning comes with the sound of brahmans intoning their sacred verses. The wandering bards renew their singing, and the shopkeepers busy themselves opening their booths. The toddy-sellers again ply their trade for thirsty morning travellers. The drunkards reel to their feet and once more shout on the streets. All over the city is heard the sound of opening doors. Women sweep the faded flowers of the festival from their courtyards. Thus the busy everyday life of the city is resumed."

The young courtier or nobleman led a sophisticated life. The *Kamasutra* says that his house should have a pleasure garden with a grass bank, an arbour of creepers, swings and aviary. His room should contain a fine bedstead, a table for keeping perfumes, flowers and collyrium; a box to keep jewels and clothes, and a spittoon. The man about town anointed his body with perfumes, applied collyrium to his eyes, painted his lips with red lac and chewed betel to sweeten his breath. "He bathes everyday, rubs his body with oil every other day, shaves his face every fourth day, and his whole body every fifth or tenth day." He ate three meals a day and spent his time in the cultivation of the arts like painting, singing and literary disputation or teaching his parrots to talk or watching cock-fighting. He was often a member of a literary society.

Temple

Besides the palace the temple was a great centre of activity. We have no survivals of Hindu temples belonging to the pre-Gupta period. From the age of the Guptas onwards every village and town came to have a temple of its own, big or small. In the Middle Ages great towered temples appeared all over India. While those of the north suffered very much from the vandalism of the Muslims, those of the south have survived better. The temple, particularly the south Indian temple, grew in proportion with the addition of shrines to minor deities as successive kings and chieftains made to it liberal donations of money and land. It occupied a very important place in the religious, cultural, social and economic life of the people. In it were celebrated the great public festivals and from it started the popular religious processions, which were joined by prince and commoner alike. Its festivals, which attracted pilgrims in large numbers as well as its construction and the casting of the idols and their maintenance gave employment to many stone masons, metallurgists and others. "On its daily routine depended numbers of priests, choristers, musicians, dancing girls, florists, cooks and others. Its periodical festivals were attended by fairs, learned contests, wrestling matches and every form of popular entertainment. The temple was also a great landlord, bank, school, hospital, fortress and what not." (K. A. Nilakānta Sastri). The larger Jain and Buddhist monasteries were similarly influential but they were not situated in the midst of towns but outside them.

Amusements

Hindu festivals, as referred to above, were attended with processions and merry-making in which rich and poor, young and old and men of all castes took part. A festival marked by much licence, "a sort of Hindu saturnalia," was

the festival of *Kama* (Holi), in which men and women sprinkled on each other coloured water or powder. Gambling was popular even in Rig Vedic times. The *Smritis* condemned it, but it remained popular with all classes. The *Arthasastra* recommends its strict control. It should be confined to state-controlled gambling houses; the gamblers were to pay a tax of five percent of the stakes and use only the dice of the house, for which a charge had to be paid.

Several games were played on boards. One was a game played on a board of 64 squares with pieces representing the king, an elephant, a chariot, a horse and four footmen. The strategy of the game called *Chaturanga* suggested a military campaign. It was at first played by four persons and moves were made by the throw of dice. Later, about the sixth century, when it spread to Persia, it came to be played by two persons, each directing two armies under a king and a general, and the use of dice was given up. From Persia it spread throughout the Arab empire and the Muslims called it *Shatranj* (*Chaturanga*). From the Muslims the Crusaders learnt it and carried it to Europe. In course of time the 'king' and 'general' became 'king' and 'queen'. By the late Middle Ages the modern form of chess had emerged and was being played both in the east and the west. Thus the world's most intellectual game had its origin in ancient India.

Outdoor games, athletic festivals and games of the amphitheatre were practically unknown to ancient India in the form in which they were known to ancient Greece and Rome. Horse and chariot racing and archery contests were known and were considered respectable pastimes. Wrestling was performed by professional men of the lower classes for the amusement of an audience. Gladiatorial combats, duelling and animal fights were popular pastimes, which were

not necessarily confined to the lower orders. According to Nuniz, a Portuguese traveller, the nobles of the Vijayanagar court used to settle their disputes by means of a duel in the presence of the king and his courtiers. Bull fight was well known to ancient Tamil Nad. It was a free fight between bulls and young herdsman. Tamil literature refers to brides of the same class watching the game and choosing their husbands. In the fight the bull was sought to be controlled but not killed; the bull, however, might kill its opponent.

Among the more intellectual pastimes were the drama of a highly literary type, music and dancing, which had to be performed in accordance with established forms explained in text books. These performances were held in the city often in the presence of the king and leading citizens. Folk-dramatic troupes, bards, acrobats, jugglers, snake-charmers and others entertained the villagers.

Clothes and Ornaments

The clothes worn by the men and women of ancient India as today were simple and few. Except the jackets or bodices of women (*cholaka*, *kanchuka*) no other traditional Hindu garment was stitched. Men wore a lower garment (*paridhana*, *vasa*) and an upper garment (*uttariya*, *adhivasa*). The lower garment was a length of cloth, fastened round the waist, one end of the cloth pleated in front while the other end, also pleated, was drawn between the legs and tucked behind. The *dhoti* was often held by a girdle, which might be a simple belt or an elaborate ornament. The upper garment was of a lesser length worn over the shoulders. The Scythians, i.e., the Sakas and the Kushanas, introduced the trousers, which were adopted by the Hindu ruling classes for a time, i.e., upto the age of the Guptas. The simpler *dhoti* and *uttariya*, the latter discarded at home, particularly during summer, were dictated

by the tropical climate of India; but there were cold seasons and regions, particularly in the north, and wool-len, cotton and silk clothes were worn according to needs. Sculpture shows that very fine muslin cloth, which showed the limbs of the wearer, was worn. The paintings of Ajanta and Bagh show that the garments were often dyed and patterned with stripes and checks.

Men used footwear to walk on the sun-baked soil, particularly during summer. The turban was not only an attractive headdress but was intended as a protection for the head both against the sun and in war. Except the orthodox Brahmans, who shaved the whole head but for a top knot, which was never to be cut, others grew their hair long.

The women, like men, usually wore an upper and lower garment. Literature contains numerous references to bodices, which sometimes appear in painting and sculpture too, but as a rule women were depicted without the upper garment. The Buddhist sculptures at Bharhut and Sanchi as well as the paintings of Ajanta and the bas-reliefs of ancient and medieval temples of the south show women naked up to the waist. On the strength of such evidence European scholars like James Fergusson stated categorically that Hindu women exposed their breasts in public until the Muslim conquest. This, however, cannot be reconciled with the traditional modesty of Hindu womanhood as well as the literary references to *cholaka* and *kanchuka*. Hindu scholars like Altekar have maintained that the Hindu artists, like the Greeks and Romans, followed a tradition of representing the feminine form in a state of semi-nakedness and that they do not represent real life.

There was great variety in women's coiffure. On festive and other special occasions women wore complicated headdresses. Usually unplaited hair was done into

a bun at the nape of the neck, held together by an ornamental fillet and adorned with flowers. Jewels of many kinds, made of gold, silver and precious stones, were worn by women. Chain with pendant adorning the forehead and worn along the parting of the hair, ear-rings, some so heavy that they stretched the ear, ornate necklaces of different sizes, gold girdles or belt with hanging strings of jewels, bangles, armlets and tinkling anklets were the commonly worn jewels. The poor made their jewels of brass or glass. Collyrium or *anjana* was used to beautify the eye. The *tilaka* on the forehead was usually marked with vermilion (*sindura*).

Food and Drink

In the Vedic Age strict vegetarianism was unknown. During the great sacrifices many heads of cattle were sacrificed and eaten. The Brahmans ate meat during the *śraddha* ceremony. Though the doctrine of *ahimsa* or non-injury to animals was already known to the Upanishads an aversion to meat-eating developed only after it was emphasised and elaborated by Jainism and Buddhism. Asoka gave a great fillip to vegetarianism by prohibiting slaughter of animals in the royal kitchen. In an edict he declared: "Formerly in the kitchen of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty daily many hundred thousands of living creatures were slaughtered. But now when this religious edict is being inscribed only three living creatures are slaughtered, two peacocks and one deer, and the deer, too, not regularly. Even these three living creatures afterwards shall not be slaughtered." Another edict says, "Husks with living things therein must not be burnt...The living must not be nourished with the living." According to Fa-Hien, who visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II (310-415), the great majority of people in the Gupta age

were vegetarians. "Throughout the country," he declares, "no one kills any living thing, nor drinks wine, nor eats onions or garlies. Only the *chandalas* go hunting and deal in flesh. Whenever he enters a village he has to warn the people by striking his stick on the ground." It is quite probable that Fa-Hien, a Buddhist pilgrim himself, exaggerated the effects of Buddhist teachings on Hindu life. The *Arthasastra* lays down rules for the proper maintenance of slaughter-houses. The warrior class always indulged in hunting and meat-eating. Medical texts of a late period recommend meat-eating in moderation. It is true, however, that the Brahmins of most parts of India were, as they are even today, strictly vegetarian.

The menu of a normal meal was not very much different from that of today. Meat or rice was taken along with curries. Wheat flour was consumed in the form of cakes moderately fried in ghee (*chapati*). Ghee was not only used for frying but was liberally poured over the dish. The poor used the oil of gingelly or mustard in the place of ghee. Milk, butter-milk and curd were drunk or mixed with food. Fruits and sweetmeats of many kinds were also eaten. The *tambula*, made up of broken areca-nut, mixed with lime and other ingredients and wrapped in betel leaves, was the favourite chewing quid, "a most popular source of post-prandial solace to the Indian." The *Smritis* condemned drinking but the numerous references to drunkenness in literature show that it was common. We have already referred to the *soma* and *sura* drinks of the Rig Vedic age. The *Arthasastra* mentions numerous alcoholic drinks and recommends state controlled manufacture of liquor. Private taverns were to be strictly controlled. The tavern keepers were to prevent their customers from excessive drinking; if from over-drinking a customer became unconscious and lost anything the tavern-keeper must make good the loss

and also pay a fine. In the north-west wine from grapes was made and exported to the rest of India, while in the south liquor was got by fermenting the sap of the palmyra or cocoanut.

SECTION II

Economic Life

Agriculture

Agricultural technique has changed very little through the ages ; in the ancient times as even today land was ploughed with the plough yoked to a pair of oxen. There is mention in the later Vedic age of heavy ploughs drawn by as many as twenty-four oxen but their use must have been rare. Iron ploughshares were known. The yield and fertility of the Indian soil and ability of her cultivators, who raised two crops a year, impressed the Greek travellers and diarists who accompanied Alexander. The yield then must have been better than now as the soil was less exhausted. The main food crops raised were wheat, barley, rice and millets. Sugarcane, oil seeds and cotton were grown over most parts. Sugar was exported to western countries. Malabar was well-known for its spices, particularly pepper, ginger, cardamom and cinnamon, which were widely in demand in Europe. Vegetables—leaf, gourds and roots of different kinds—were grown everywhere. Trees yielding fruits and nuts were specially grown in orchards. The most valued fruit was the mango, which grew during summer. The banana was grown in all wet lands. The tamarind was grown all over South India. In the ancient period the palmyra was known but not the cocoanut, which was imported in the Middle Ages from Indonesia. The areca-nut, which was first grown in the south, was introduced into North India in the early centuries of the Christian era. The

sandal much loved for its fragrance, grew in the south. The date, the walnut, the grape and the almond were importations from the Middle East, particularly Persia, and are little mentioned in ancient literature.

Stock-breeding

In the early rural and the still earlier pastoral communities cattle was the chief movable property. It was absolutely essential for cultivation and transport. The cow, the bull, the buffalo and the goat were the first animals to be domesticated and great attention was paid to their breeding and feeding. Each village had its own professional breeder, who maintained breeding bulls. Stall-feeding was not known. There was more pasture and waste land than now and the cattle of each village was led out for grazing in the morning by the communal cowherd, who drove them back home only in the evening. The Krishna legend suggests that there must have been communities of professional herdsmen, who probably led a semi-nomadic life in the wilder parts of the country. The Yadavas and the Abhiras, who established their own kingdoms in the historical period in Malwa and western Deccan traced their descent from such communities. Milk, ghee and butter were important articles of diet and the Krishna legend speaks of their plentiful stock in every household. Though beef was eaten the cow was held sacred and inviolable. The ox was the usual beast of burden. The buffalo was sacrificed to the goddess Durga and the cult became popular in the Middle Ages. The goat's and the sheep's wool was used in the manufacture of blankets.

The horse was a luxury animal, maintained by the warrior class. In India horse breeding was confined to Sind and the north-west. Horses were imported from Arabia and Persia and supplied throughout the country. It is known that the elephant was domesticated as early as the sixth

century B.C. Kings maintained special forest tracts as elephant preserves and employed trackers, hunters and tamers to catch wild elephants and tame them. The elephants were used in war and as vehicles for kings. They were also maintained by temples to adorn festive processions. The camel was known and used as a beast of burden in the dry regions of North India. The dog was as common in ancient India as it is today. Though used in hunting it was never treated as a domestic pet. Indian dogs of a large breed from the cold hills of North India were in great demand in Persia and Egypt for use in war and hunting.

Among birds the fowl, the peacock and the parrot were well-known. Though the fowl were reared eggs did not form an important item of diet. Peacocks were kept both for food and ornament and there were whole villages of peacock rearers. In the Middle Ages they ceased to be used as food. The parrot was reared and kept in cages in the houses of nobles ; it was a bird of beauty believed to possess powers of talking. Literature refers to it as a pet of ladies, who devoted much time in teaching it to talk. Though silk-worms were bred and reared in India, especially in Assam and Bengal, silk-weaving was not mastered before the Christian era. The earliest silks were imported from China and the *Arthasastra's* reference to *Cheenapatta* is significant.

Industry : Crafts and craft-guilds

Industrial crafts developed and grew in complexity along with the growth of town life and the needs of royal courts. Stone-cutting and polishing, metallurgy, carpentry and spinning and weaving were the major industries. Ancient Indian craftsmen worked with simple tools but attained a high degree of technical skill and perfection as attested by the Asokan pillars, the Iron Pillar of Delhi and the great demand in the Roman empire for the fine cotton cloth of India. The Asokan

pillars, made of sandstone from Chunar, some 30' to 40' in height and weighing about 50 tons, were so well polished that several foreign visitors had mistaken them for metallic pillars. The Iron Pillar of Chandra (probably Chandragupta II) at Mehrauli, near Delhi, about 24' in height, is a single piece of iron, "of a size and weight which could not have been produced by the best European ironfounders until about a hundred years ago." The fabrication, conveyance over long distances and erection of the monolithic Asokan pillars and the rust free iron pillar, which has withstood the rains of 1,500 years, are eloquent testimonies of the skill of the ancient Indian engineers and metallurgists. Her spinners and weavers produced silks and muslins, which were so thin as to make them almost transparent; ancient sculpture reveals the limbs through folds of such textiles.

In ancient India there were individual craftsmen, state manufactories and craft guilds. The individual craftsman had his workshop in his home, worked with the help of the members of his family and usually sold his wares at his doors. Occasionally an individual craftsman became wealthy and owned more than one workshop. From an early Jaina source we learn that there was a wealthy potter, by name Saddalaputta, who owned 500 pottery workshops and a fleet of boats, which supplied his wares throughout the Ganges valley. The State owned textile and artillery workshops and employed salaried craftsmen. It also owned and worked the mines.

Our chief sources for an understanding of the ancient Indian craft guilds are the Buddhist scriptures in Pali. The craft guild was an industrial and mercantile organization, which included all craftsmen of a particular trade. Every town had its own guild in each trade; sometimes a guild was so important that it embraced several towns; in any

case each trade had its own guild, even thieves organizing themselves in guilds. As guilds were organized on the basis of trades and professions and as castes and sub-castes too developed on similar lines it is difficult sometimes to distinguish between the development of a craft guild and that of a trade caste.

The craft guild (*Sreni*) was headed by a chief called the Elder (*Jyeshtaka* Sanskrit, *Jethaka* Pali), who was assisted by a council of senior craftsmen and merchants. The *Jethaka* was often the richest craftsman in the trade and his office was hereditary. He was influential and his advice was sometimes sought by the king. Each guild was a corporate body and enjoyed considerable autonomy. It had its own court with full jurisdiction over all members and distinguishing insignia like banners and *chamaras*, which were carried in festive processions. Major guilds had their own militias, which fought along with the king's army if required. The guild council framed rules of work and fixed standards, wages and prices. If any member violated a rule he was tried by the guild court, whose judgment was upheld by the state. The court heard and decided cases of dispute. It could expel a member from the guild which might mean ruin as he could not practise his trade any more. It provided for the maintenance of widows and orphans and sick members. The expenses were met out of a reserve fund built from subscriptions paid by members. It received deposits and gave loans, and acted as trustees of religious endowments made by benefactors; on their behalf it regularly carried out certain services in a temple or during a festival. Numerous inscriptions on walls of temples record such services rendered by guilds; often the guild itself made endowments. In short the craft guild was the hub of the economic and social life of the craftsmen belonging to a particular trade.

The guild system did not always work well. Sometimes

there were rival guilds belonging to the same trade and inscriptions refer to their bitter quarrels.

Currency and Credit

A money economy is essential for trade and it came into existence in India not earlier than the sixth century B.C. The earliest Indian coins were uninscribed punch marked silver and bronze pieces of irregular shape but fairly accurate weight. The punch-marks like those on the Indus seals were probably emblems of kings or chieftains or merchants, who issued them. The Graeco-Bactrians introduced inscribed coins of a better shape and finish of gold, silver, bronze and nickel. The Satavahanas of the Deccan issued coins of lead and various alloys. The Kushana coins were of gold and copper. The gold *dinar* was based on the Roman *denarius*. The Guptas issued gold, silver and copper coins, which are the best examples of early Indian coins. By this time a large range of silver and copper coins of different weight and character issued by kings and chieftains had come into circulation. The coins were accepted for their bullion value and the ideas of legal tender and token money were unknown. Coins issued by defunct dynasties and foreign coins, *i.e.*, Greek, Roman and Persian, were current. Some dynasties like the Palas of Bengal did not issue their own coins but managed with those of other states. Naturally some types of coins became localised. For small payments cowry shells were regularly used for a long time.

Moneylending was recognised by the *Dharmasastras*, which laid down rates of interest often calculated monthly. For secured loans the rate of interest was $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent per month or 15 per cent per year. For unsecured loans Brahmans, according to Manu, were charged 24 per cent, Kshatriyas 36 per cent, Vaisyas 48 per cent and Sudras 60 per cent per annum. The *Arthasastra* gives a schedule of rates

for traders : merchants trading within the town 5 per cent per month or 60 per cent per annum, merchants carrying their wares through forests 10 per cent per month or 120 percent per annum, those doing overseas trade 20 percent per month or 240 percent per annum. These rates "are measures of both the profit and the risk of ancient commerce." Defaulting debtors were imprisoned or as bondsmen of the creditors they repaid their debt by means of their labour. The *Arthashastra* lays down the rules that interest payments should cease when the total interest paid equals the principal and that loans on securities which are used by the creditor for his own profit should be free of interest. Credit was provided by guilds, sometimes by temples and often by individual bankers, professional moneylenders and merchants.

Inland trade : Merchant guilds.

The local merchant (*Sreshtin*, *Chetti*, *Sait*) combined trading with moneylending. He was often wealthy and honoured by the king. He bought the products of craftsmen and those of the peasants and sold them for profit. He specialised in distribution. Just as producers formed themselves into craft guilds, the distributors or merchants formed merchant guilds or mercantile companies, some of which are mentioned in the inscriptions and literature of South India. A famous mercantile corporation called *Manigramam* carried on business not only in South India but also in Ceylon through its agents. The merchant guild, like the craft guild, was a corporate body. It employed mercenaries to guard caravans, owned warehouses in different towns, in which the members might stock their goods, helped members or their families during periods of trouble or loss, maintained quality by preventing adulteration and avoided competition. Thus cooperation both of producers

(industrial and not agricultural) and distributors was known, but we do not hear of consumers' cooperation.

Retail trade was often in the hands of craftsmen themselves, who displayed their wares at their doors. Each trade was concentrated in a street, e.g., the potters' street, the metal smith's street, the weavers' street, etc. We have noted above that the market officials of the Mauryas regulated market prices and enforced quality. From the days of the Buddha there were hawkers and pedlars too, who carried their wares from house to house.

Trade routes : Transport

In the days of the Mauryas the entire country was served by trade routes. The main trade route of North India linked Tamralipti (near Calcutta) with Takshasila *via* Pataliputra, Banares, Kausambi, Mathura and Sakala (Sialkot). From Takshasila the trunk road went to Central Asia along the Kabul valley. A branch took off from Mathura and went to Patala (Haiderabad in Sind) *via* Rajasthan. Another branch linked Kausambi with Bhrikuccha (Broach) on the mouth of the Narmada *via* Ujjain. Numerous feeder roads linked these main roads with the interior. The main southern route ran through western Deccan. It linked Ujjain and Broach with Pratishthana (Paithan), the ancient Satavahana capital, near Bombay. From Pratishthana the road crossed the Godavari and the Krishna and ran to Kanchi and Madurai. Feeders and branches linked the main road with the other southern cities. The eastern route from Bengal did not proceed beyond Orissa atleast upto the Gupta period.

Transport was dangerous. From the Asokan inscriptions, the *Arthashastra* and the *Sukraniti* we learn that roads were wide, frequently repaired and provided with drains, but the numerous rivers were not bridged and could be

crossed by ferries only and even the best roads were dusty during summer and impassable during the season of heavy rains. When the rivers were in spate all travel ceased. The roads often passed through dense jungle inhabited by tigers, elephants and snakes. Bands of professional robbers were a perennial menace. Under such conditions merchants travelled in a huge caravan which sometimes consisted of 500 men, moving with their merchandise in bullock carts and on pack animals, viz., oxen, mules, asses and camels. Pali literature mentions the caravan leader or *Sarthavaha*, the land-pilot or *Thala-niyyamaka* and bands of professional caravan-guards, who undertook to provide safe conduct over a particular route.

Merchandise

Long and short distance trade was carried on in a variety of commodities. The southern country supplied gold, gems, spices and sandalwood; from the east, i.e., Bengal and Banaras, came silks and muslins; the hills supplied musk and saffron. Iron was mined in South Bihar and copper in Rajasthan and parts of the Deccan. These metals were carried through the length and breadth of the country as well as sugar and salt, both sea salt and rock salt. Salt was manufactured at several places along the coast and there were rock-salt deposits in the Punjab (Salt Ranges).

Overseas Trade

Classical Tamil literature as well as the accounts of the Greek travellers like Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy and the anonymous *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Geography of the Indian Ocean) testify to an active trade between India and the west, particularly the Roman empire in the first few centuries of the Christian era and probably earlier. In the days of the Buddha Indian sailors sailed along the coasts of

South India and probably visited Burma, Malaya and Indonesia. With the fall of the Roman empire the western trade declined but it revived with the growing demand of medieval Europe for the eastern products; but in the later Middle Ages the trade was carried not by the Hindus but by the Arabs. In the east the trade with Malaya, Indonesia and China, particularly from South India, never flagged until the Muslim conquest.

Trade with the Roman empire

Spices, perfumes, precious stones, jewels, muslins, ivory, both raw and carved, pearls, sugar, Indian iron which was liked for its purity and hardness, rice, dyestuffs like lac and indigo, wild animals, birds and monkeys were regularly exported from India to the parts of the Roman empire. Indian elephants, lions and tigers were required for the wild gladiatorial shows and games of the circus arranged by the Roman emperors and noblemen. Parrots, peacocks and even monkeys from India were kept by wealthy Roman ladies as their pets. The wild animals were transported by the land route and the rest were sent by sea, up the Persian Gulf to Persia and Babylonia and up the Red Sea to Egypt. The elephants were accompanied by their mahouts. Indian fortune-tellers, jugglers and prostitutes travelled along with merchants and settled in Rome. The Greek writers like Strabo and Pliny refer to several embassies sent by Indian kings to the Roman emperors. The earliest mission sent by a Pandya king met Augustus, the first Roman emperor, at Athens about 20 B.C. One of the members of this mission was an ascetic called Zarmanochegas (Sramanacharya), who is said to have burnt himself to death at Athens having grown tired of worldly life. Justinian (527-565), the emperor of Constantinople, had an Indian cook. It is interesting to note that the Graeco-Latin terminology to indicate

the Indian articles of trade were adaptations of Sanskrit or Tamil names, e.g., emerald from *marakata*, ginger from *sringavera*, pepper from *pippali*, sugar from *sarkara*, cotton from *karpasa*, rice from *arisi* etc.

Extent of Indian sea-faring

Though most of the western trade was carried in Greek and Roman ships, which were bigger and heavier than Indian ships, the latter, it is known, sailed as far as Alexandria, Babylon, and Madagascar. Socotra (Sukhatara-dvipa), a small island south of Arabia, had a large Indian colony. In the east the Indian vessels sailed to China, Burma, Malaya and the islands of Indonesia. The eastern trade was practically in the hands of South Indian seamen.

Chief ports

The chief ports of ancient India were Tamralipti, Kaverippattinam (Puhar) and Korkai on the east coast and Patala, Bhrigukaccha, Supara (near Bombay) and Muziris (near Cranganore) on the west coast. Kaverippattinam was the port of the Cholas, Korkai that of the Pandyas and Muziris that of the Cheras. These were dynasties of Tamil kings who ruled over the extreme south in and around the beginning of the Christian era (the Sangam Age). They maintained their harbours in good condition and provided them with lighthouses, wharves and warehouses.

Imports from the Roman empire

Yavana settlements

In return for her exports to the west India imported chiefly glassware, pottery, tin, lead, wine and slave girls, but these were quite inadequate to pay her exports, the bulk of which had to be paid in gold. The balance of trade, in other words, was very favourable to India. Pliny attributed the great drain (net loss) to the east of 100,000,000 sesterces year

after year (1 sesterce = half a rupee) to the degenerate and luxurious life of Rome, particularly of the women. Roman coins of all types have been found in large quantities in many parts of South India. Greeks and other subjects of the Roman empire came to India in the wake of trade and settled at various places. Inscriptions mention one such western trading station at Arikamedu near Pondicherry. Excavations at this site have revealed the remains of several depots of foreign merchants containing chiefly glassware and sherds of dated Roman pottery. A temple was erected at Muziris to emperor Augustus. Indian literature refers to the western traders and settlers as Yavanas, though the term was originally used to denote the Greeks only. Tamil literature contains numerous references to the Yavanas, who were employed by kings and chieftains as bodyguards and military engineers, and to the Yavana merchants, whose ships were big and beautiful and whose prosperity never waned. Kaverippattinam was a busy port, where were to be seen many foreigners and where the foreign ships were busy loading and unloading.

The Eastern trade

We have already referred to Indian exports, particularly from the southern ports, to Burma, Malaya, Java (Yavadvipa), Sumatra (Suvarnavdipa), Borneo, Bali and other islands of Indonesia, and China. From China South India and Ceylon bought silk and porcelain ware. This trade continued for centuries. In the wake of peaceful commercial enterprise the Buddhist and Hindu faiths and cultures migrated to these regions and Buddhist and Hindu kingdoms and colonies were established in Sumatra, Java, Malaya, Cambodia (Kamboja) and Annam (Champa). These

settlements were in a flourishing condition throughout the Middle Ages.

Decline of foreign trade

India's foreign trade gradually passed into the hands of the Arabs in the west and the Chinese in the east, who outstripped her craftsmen in the art of ship-building. Indian merchants preferred to sell their wares towards the close of the Middle Ages at their own depots to foreign merchants rather than take them to foreign lands. The idea gradually developed in this age that foreign travel, particularly across the sea, brought impurity to one's caste. Sailing came to be looked upon as dangerous and unsuitable. "The Muslim invasions encouraged xenophobia, and the people who had planted their colonies from Socotra to Borneo became, with religious sanction, a nation of landlubbers."

CHAPTER 7

RELIGION IN ANCIENT INDIA

Hinduism is a product of slow growth. The religion of the Vedas belonging to the period 2,000-600 B.C. was different in many respects from the popular Hinduism of today. It was a simple religion centering round the many phenomena and forces of nature, which were slowly personified and for whose propitiation elaborate sacrifices were performed. In the age of the Upanishads, roughly from 1000 to 600 or 300 B.C. philosophical doctrines about the ultimate reality or supreme God, *Brahman* and *Atman* (universal soul and individual soul) and their relations, *karma* and transmigration, etc. were developed not independently but out of suggestions thrown out by the Vedas. Sacrificial ritualism of the previous age ceased to be dominant. The age of the Buddha, roughly 600 B.C. to 200 A.D., was an age of intellectual ferment, which saw the rise and spread of the heterodox sects of Buddhism and Jainism. The older religion of the Vedas and the Upanishads, of ritualism and metaphysics, had to take special note of the ethical idealism of the new sects. At the same time it had to consider the new communities, professing strange faiths, that were being rapidly included into the Aryan fold, thanks to the foundation and expansion of Aryan kingdoms. It had to readjust itself and accept some of the myth and symbolism of the natives. The result was remarkable. In the place of ritualism and intellectualism (*Jnana*) there came about worship of heroes, not men who became gods but gods who descended to the earth as men to teach them in a simple and direct manner the ethics of the Vedas. The popular cults of Vaishnavism, Saivism and Durga worship were born. *Bhakti* as a means of salvation, came to be emphasised more than *jnana* or *karma*. In short Brahmanism was on its way to becoming Hinduism.

SECTION I

*The Religion of the Vedas***The Vedic Gods**

Religion began with the craving of the sick heart of man for a higher spirit, a guide, a support on which he could rest, a complete and perfect being to whom he could appeal in distress. With it also began "the process of god-making in the factory of man's mind." (S. Radhakrishnan). The Indo-Europeans saw in the sky, the firmament of heaven, the infinite and perfect being. To them *Dyaus* was the sky god, the great god of heaven. He possessed unlimited effulgence and gave brightness to the sun and moon. The Aryans called him *Deva* (*div* = to shine); the Greeks *Zeus* and the Romans *Jupiter* (*Zeus Piter* or Father of Heaven). Heaven and Earth were looked upon as Father and Mother and sun, moon, fire, wind, rain etc. were their offspring. The Vedic hymns are addressed to the children rather than to Father Heaven or Mother Earth. The Rig Veda, however, refers to *Prithvi* or Earth, but the reference is both vague and rare.

To the Vedic Aryans the nearest approach to the god of gods was *Varuna*, the sky-god. To the Greeks he was known as *Uranus* and to the Iranians as *Ahura-mazda*. He covers or encompasses everything, including heaven and earth (*var* = to cover). He watches over the world and punishes evil doers. He forgives the sins of those who implore his pardon. He is omnipresent and omniscient. A Rig Vedic hymn addressed to Varuna declares: "Wherever two together plot, and deem they are alone, King Varuna is there, a third, and all their schemes are known." He is looked upon with fear and awe while the other gods are approached with cheer and friendliness. The burden of many of the hymns to Varuna is: "Forgive the sins we mortals have committed, O Varuna,

do not destroy us in your anger." Varuna is the guardian of *Rita* or cosmic order, "a concept which was perhaps the highest flight of Rig Vedic thought." *Rita* stands for regularity in the course of things, particularly in the movements of the sun, moon and stars and the alternations of day and night, and of the seasons. It means law and justice immanent in nature. In course of time *rita* and non-*rita* (*anarta*) came to mean truth and untruth respectively. *Mitra* (Iranian *Mitra*, Roman *Mithras*) was a companion of Varuna and represented light. *Varuna* and *Mitra* were the custodians of *rita*. The Vedas also mention *Parjanya* as a sky-god. He was perhaps the fore-runner of Indra.

Indra was both rain-god and war god. Armed with the thunderbolt (*Vajra*) and lightning he made the clouds rain and destroyed the demons of drought and darkness. As war god he led and inspired the Aryan hosts against the Dasyus, whose forts he destroyed (hence *Purandara*). He was the god of weather, food, prosperity, war and victory. He was the god of gods and soon became more important than *Varuna*. He kept a grand court and indulged in feasting and drinking. *Maruts*, the terrible storm-riding spirits, were the constant companions of Indra. *Rudra* (the Howler or storm-god) and *Vayu* (the wind-god) were also closely associated with Indra. *Rudra* was not a popular god like Indra. He dwelt in the high mountains. He was feared because he could send out fierce storms and shoot arrows of disease and disaster. Later he developed a beneficent aspect and was called *Siva*. He became the guardian of healing and herbs and could restore the health of a devotee, who sought his mercy. *Vayu* became an important deity only in the Middle Ages, when he was considered the god of life-giving air and a son of Vishnu.

Another important god was *Surya* (the sun-god, the Greek *Helios*). He drives across the sky in a flaming

chariot. He provides life and light to the world. He sees everything and spies the world. Among the gods associated with *Surya Savitur* (the Stimulator) was important. To this solar deity, often identified with Sun, is addressed the hymn called the *Gayatri*, considered the most holy of the Vedic hymns: *Tat Savitur vareniam bhargo devasya dheemahi, dheeyo yo nah prachodayat*, i.e., "Let us meditate on that adorable splendour of Savitur; may he enlighten our minds." *Vishnu* is another solar deity. He is great in form and covers the three worlds with his three paces. Though a minor deity in the *Rig Veda* his importance increased very much later. *Pushan*, another deity was the guardian of roads, wayfarers and straying cattle. The *Asvins* were the twin horsemen of the sun. They soon acquired an independent status and drove across the sky in their own chariots. They are the gods of dawn and dusk. They went to the help of people in distress, possessed wonderful healing powers and protected conjugal love.

Agni (Latin *Ignis*) was the fire-god. More than 200 hymns of the *Rig Veda* are addressed to him. He dwells in the domestic hearth, the fire sticks and lightning and is present at every sacrifice. He is the intermediary between men and gods,—“O *Agni*, bring hither *Varuna* to our offering; bring *Indra* from the skies, the *Maruts* from the air.” He consumed the offerings made in the sacrifice and carried them to the gods. He was looked upon as father, kinsman, brother and friend.

Soma, (*Haoma* of the *Zend Avesta*) which was raised to the status of a god, was originally a plant which yielded an intoxicating juice, meant to be consumed by the priests before chanting the sacred hymns during a sacrifice. The same juice was also offered to the high gods as an oblation along with *hee* etc. Instead of producing physical intoxication the drink was expected to provide the priest with new

spiritual ecstasy and powers. The drink was prepared at the commencement of a sacrifice by pressing the plant between stones and during this ceremony hymns addressed to Soma were chanted,—“O Soma, poured out for Indra to drink, flow on in a pure, most sweet and exhilarating current.” Later on Soma came to be identified with the moon, which was supposed to govern the life of all plants.

The Vedic pantheon included a number of other gods. *Yama*, son of Vivasvat (Yima, the son of Vivanhvant of the Avesta) was the first mortal to die and he became the king of the dead. In the Vedas he is simply the host who welcomed the newcomers. In the Brahmanas he becomes the judge and chastiser of men. *Ushas* (Dawn), *Aditi*, the mother of the gods, *Sarasvati* (goddess of learning) and *Aranyani* (goddess of forests) are female deities. *Gandharvas* were divine musicians and *Apsarases* were divine courtesans.

The above gods, who are all mentioned in the Rig Veda, do not form a definite genealogy or order of precedence. No Homer or Hesiod attempted such a construction. Their relationships are vague. Their functions overlap. It is clear that the Rig Veda is a collection of hymns addressed by priests and devotees to their favourite gods, “an imperfect syncretism of many tribal beliefs and cults.” In the post-Vedic period a more orderly pantheon was evolved with fewer gods, each with definite status and functions.

The Vedic sacrifice

The idea of ‘sacrifice’ was to sacrifice something of one’s possession to the Gods in order to obtain their blessings. The *Grihya Sutras* of a later day describe small domestic sacrifices to be performed by the head of the household for the welfare of his family. It is probable that

they were performed in the Vedic period too. Actually the Rig Vedic sacrifice was one performed on a big scale, involving complex rites, by a number of priests at the instance of and paid for by kings and tribal chiefs. Intoxicated with *soma* the priests experienced strange sensations of power, felt themselves big, had wondrous visions of the gods and made them descend to the sacred *kusa* (straw) on the sacrificial field and partake of the offerings made, viz., milk, meat, butter, ghee, rice, *soma* etc. Agni was, of course, the intermediary.

The very first sacrifice was that performed by the gods in which the primeval man (Prajapati; Purusha) was sacrificed. Out of the sacrifice the world was created. The reference to this sacrifice in the *Purusha Sukta* appears to be metaphorical for in it "Spring was the melted butter, Summer the fuel, and Autumn the oblation." From that sacrifice were born the animals, air, wood and village, hymns and chants, metres and spells, horses and all beings with two rows of teeth, cattle, goats and sheep, the four *varnas*, Sun, Moon, Indra and Agni, the sky, the earth and the four quarters. This Hymn of Creation was recited in the course of every sacrifice by the priests, who thereby maintained the cosmic process. It was actually thought that but for the regular performance of sacrifices order would vanish and chaos would result. Even a slight error in ritual would bring down upon the earth the wrath of the gods. The priests of sacrifice thus occupied a position of great importance and respect.

SECTION II

The Philosophy of the Upanishads

Transition to the Upanishads

The Atharva Veda represents the assimilation of many of the cults of the conquered, uncivilised *Dasyus* by the

conquering civilised Aryans. It includes the worship of spirits and stars, trees and mountains, witchcraft, sorcery and other superstitions of the jungle tribes. The Aryan invaders, smaller in number, though better equipped in arms than the natives, had to absorb the faiths and crude beliefs of the latter in order to save their own religion. Otherwise there was the danger of their faiths being swamped or overwhelmed.

The *Brahmanas*, which are the earliest commentaries on the Vedas, are often regarded as the second part of the Vedas. They do not break any new ground and are mainly intended to guide the priests through the complexities of sacrificial rites. The chief *Brahmanas* are the *Aitareya* and the *Satapatha*. They lay emphasis on sacrifice, the observance of the *varnasrama dharma*, the unquestioned authority of the Vedas and the supremacy of the priest. Vishnu rises in importance and Narayana is also mentioned.

The Upanishads : The Vedanta

The term *upanishad* means "sitting down near" the teacher, a session of the master and his disciples in which instruction was imparted in philosophical doctrines. There was a free discussion on the Vedic texts and concepts in the course of which doubts were freely raised and every attempt made to resolve them. The *Upanishads* containing these esoteric discussions are sometimes referred to as the third or final part of the Vedas—the *Vedanta*—, containing the essence of the Vedas. These are the final and decisive expositions of the Vedas. Some 108 *Upanishads* are enumerated, of which the *Brihad-aranyaka* and the *Chandogya* in prose and the *Katha* and the *Swetasvatara* in verse are considered important. The prose works are mostly in the form of conversation. The following are the new doctrines discussed in the *Upanishads*.

Theories of Creation

Even in the Rig Vedic age intelligent minds were trying to find out a satisfactory explanation of the world. The *Purusha Sukta*, in the last book of the Rig Veda, says that the world was created as the result of a primeval sacrifice in which the creator-god sacrificed Himself to Himself. Another hymn in the same book, however, strikes a note of scepticism. It says :

“ But, after all, who knows, and who can say
whence it all came, and how creation happened ?
The gods themselves are later than creation,
so who knows truly whence it has arisen ?
Whence all creation had its origin,
He, whether he fashioned it or whether He did not,
He, who surveys it all from highest heaven,
He knows—or may be even He does not know.”*

Other theories are mentioned in the Upanishads. Prajapati (the Creator) grew tired of his loneliness and out of one half of his body produced a wife. This couple took the forms of animals and men and created the universe. According to another theory the world emerged from a “Golden Embryo” (*Hiranyagarbha*). Some teachers, who were not strictly orthodox, believed that the world began as water, fire or air (*akasa*). Some believed that the universe is based on a principle—fate (*niyati*), time (*kala*), nature (*svabhava*) or chance (*sangati*). Even a theory of evolution or “ripening” (*parinama*) was suggested. There were sceptics who thought on the lines of the Rig Vedic hymn quoted above and materialists among the Upanishad teachers. Buddha preached that speculation on creation, etc., was fruitless and mere waste of time. Some proclaimed that the

* Basham, P. 248.

world was made of eternal atoms. "The intellectual life of India in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. was as rigorous and pullulating as the jungle after rains."

Ultimate Reality : Brahman

Discussions on creation and creator led to the question of one supreme being, the ultimate reality. Some Rig Vedic hymns made a vague reference to *Brahman*, a mysterious eternal all pervading entity, "a sort of supernatural electricity," which resided in the sound of the sacred utterance (*mantra*), especially the sound *Aum* or *Om*. The priest, who recited the sacred *mantra*, i.e., one who is possessed of Brahman is a Brahmana. The Upanishads developed the idea of a single power and clearly recognised only one spirit—infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. He is one without a second. He stands above time, space, universe and the gods. "The half-gods of the Veda die and the true god arrives."

A hymn of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* contains the following conversation :

"How many gods are there really, O Yajnavalkya."

"One."

"Now answer us a further question. Agni, Vayu, Aditya, Kala (time), Prana (breath), Brahma (the creator), Rudra, Vishnu, thus do some meditate on him, some on another. Say which of these is the best for us."

"These are but the chief manifestations of the highest, the immortal, the incorporeal Brahman.....Brahman indeed is all this....."

Brahman and Atman : Monism

In the Upanishads the thought process works itself out fully ; intelligent speculation about the ultimate reality leads to the monistic idea. Upanishadic thought did not rest

content with the rejection of Vedic polytheism. From monism monotheism was developed. It is not enough merely to recognise Brahman. One has to be continuously conscious of it. Some wise man, say a thinking sage, with eyes closed, contemplated Brahman and saw it within. Soon the idea developed that the immortal spirit or *Brahman* exists within the soul or self or *Atman*. "We need not look to the sky for the bright light ; the glorious fire is within the soul." "God's dwelling-place is the heart of man." The great cosmic force and the inner self of man are one and the same. Both are immortal. Brahman is *Atman* and *vice versa*. When man realises the oneness of his *Atman* (*Jeevatma*) and the *Brahman* (*Paramatma*) he becomes free and transcends joy and sorrow, life and death.

What is the *Atman*, which is the same as *Brahman* ? What is the soul ? The suggestions that it is a small being in the heart, that it is nothing but breath, that it is a mysterious fluid flowing in the veins were all rejected in favour of the idea that it is immeasurable and incorporeal. The dialogue between the father and the son in the *Chandogya Upanishad* explains the nature of reality or *Brahman* and proclaims that everything that exists has its self in it.

"Fetch me a fruit of the *Nyagrodha* (banyan) tree."

"Here is one, Sir."

"Break it."

"It is broken, Sir."

"What do you see there ?"

"These seeds, almost infinitesimal."

"Break one of them."

"It is broken, Sir."

"What do you see there ?"

"Not anything, Sir."

The father said, "My son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive there, of that very essence this great

Nyagrodha tree exists. Believe it, my son, that which is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Svetaketu, art it."

(*Chandogya Upanishad*)

Tat tvam asi, "You (the individual) are that (universal essence),"—this identity of the universal and individual entities is the natural result of the recognition of one ultimate reality, and it is the leading theme of the Upanishads. The infinite cannot be defined. If it can be defined and known it ceases to be infinite. Yajnavalkya says that the Brahman can be defined in negative terms. It is not this, not this (*neti, neti*). But the later Upanishads begin to identify the impersonal universal essence with a personal God. They give to it the names of *Purusha*, *Rudra* or *Siva*. The growth of the idea of the personal God and the idea that He could be reached not only by meditation and knowledge but also by devotion and worship resulted in the theism of the Epic Age, as illustrated in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Transmigration and Karma

Rig Vedic eschatology was simple. It postulated heaven and hell. The souls of those men who had regularly and rightly performed sacrifices and worshipped the gods went to heaven, where they got new bodies and lived a life of eternal joy in the company of the gods, without sorrow, hunger or lust. The wicked souls that had not worshipped the gods were confined to hell. Heaven was presided over by Yama, who welcomed and entertained the good souls. Hell was a dark abyss. There was no return from heaven or hell. There was no conception of rebirth. The *Brahmanas* continued the idea of individual immortality and elaborated it by specifying which sacrifice enabled one to reach the domain of a particular God.

The *Upanishads* did not accept the Rig Vedic view of individual immortality under which human souls were promoted to heaven or condemned to hell for all time. They propounded the idea of rebirth or transmigration of soul or *samsara* on the basis of one's own deeds or *karma*. Transmigration was not a new theory. It was held by many primitive peoples that the souls of the dead passed to an animal or plant before being reborn in a human body. If the fruit or vegetable containing the latent soul of the unborn child was eaten by one of the parents conception occurred. Adopting and developing the idea the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says that the souls of the righteous first pass to heaven, the kingdom of Yama, and then to the moon. From the moon they pass into air (*akasa*), whence they return to the earth in the form of rain. Finally they become the food of man and woman, to whom they are born once again as human beings. The souls of the wicked finally pass to animals, birds, worms or insects. It was all due to *karma*. The lot in which a man finds himself is his own making. The doctrine of *samsara* based on *karma* provides a satisfactory explanation of the mystery of suffering and holds out hope to the humblest as well as the most wicked souls to pull themselves up. An insect by its own good deeds might be reborn as a human being. The idea was well established in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.

The soul passed through repeated births. The question 'for how long?' naturally arose. By right living a soul might reach heaven, but it will be reborn after a short stay there. Hence attainment of heaven is not enough. *Upanishadic* thought searched for something higher, something above heaven and the cycle of rebirth. A man can attain *moksha* or *mukti*, the highest heaven, from which there is no rebirth, by realising the identity of his soul with Brahman. This could be done only by meditation, asceticism and the

cultivation of the highest knowledge. According to later thought *mukti* could be realised also by devotion.

SECTION III

Jainism and Buddhism

The sacrificial ritualism of the Vedas and the intellectualism of the Upanishads, while satisfying the needs of the Brahmans, could not satisfy the yearning of the common man. He wanted a religion more directly connected with his own daily life than mere ritualism or metaphysical speculation. He questioned the utility of bloody sacrifices, which had become overridden with meaningless rites. The practice of asceticism to realise Brahman had degenerated into barbarism and superstition. An ascetic is said to have explained to the Buddha twenty-two methods of self-mortification in respect of food and thirteen about clothing. The Brahman priest, well known for his renunciation, had become greedy. Pretending that he was in the confidence of the gods he addressed the needy thus : "Son, make a sacrifice to God and a payment to me, and thy sins will be forgiven." The Buddha and Mahavira attempted to arrest the aristocratic character of Brahmanism and correct the superstition of the orthodox faith, but became, after their deaths, founders of new heterodox sects. The revolt against the orthodox practices was more pronounced in the eastern region (Magadha), where the Aryan influence was less felt, than in the Madhyadesa, and it was here that Mahavira and Buddha began their teachings and attracted a ready following.

Life of Mahavira (599-527 B.C.)

Though there are differences of opinion on the matter it is generally accepted that Mahavira was an older contem-

porary of the Buddha*. According to tradition he was born in 599 B.C. at Vaisali in a Kshatriya family. The Jain tradition attributes great antiquity to Jainism and refers to Mahavira as the twenty-fourth and last *tirthankara* or prophet (the first, Parsvanatha, living 200 years before him) but for all practical purposes he is taken to be the founder of the faith. He was the second son of Siddharta, a chieftain of Kundagrama, near Vaisali (Magadha). After the death of his parents and the accession of his elder brother to the chieftaincy he became an ascetic. He was then thirty. Though he was already married and had a daughter he had no liking for the life of a *grahasta*. For twelve years he led the life of a wandering mendicant subjecting himself to all kinds of penances and austerities. In the first year he wore a single garment and later even that was discarded. Gosala Maskariputra was his companion for six years. The two quarrelled and Gosala separated himself to found the seat of the Ajivikas. In the thirteenth year his penance he attained enlightenment and was recognised as *Jina* (conqueror) and *Arhat* ("great"). Very soon he became a reputed leader of a band of ascetics and preached for thirty years in Magadha and adjacent Gangetic areas. He was patronised by kings. In 527 B.C., at the age of seventy-two he died as a result of self-imposed starvation.

His teachings

Mahavira rejected the theory of divine creation of the universe and held that the world is eternal. It goes through

* According to a western writer, Barth, "The legend of Vardhamana, or to apply to him the name, which is most in use, Mahavira, the great hero, the Jina of the present age presents so many and so peculiar points of contact with that of Gautamma Buddha, that we are instinctively led to conclude that one and the same person is the subject of both." References in literature, however, conclusively prove that the two were different.

an infinite number of ages and in each age there are periods of progress and decline. The universe is filled with souls or *jivas* (lives). The Jaina conception of soul is different from that of the Upanishads. It is not the property of human, animal or plant life only but also of apparently inanimate objects like metals, stones and water. Originally a soul is an infinitely small object, naturally bright, pure, blissful and all knowing. Due to the adherence of *karma* or action, the soul becomes clouded, heavy and unfree. First it gets a spiritual and then a material body. The adherence of more and more *karmic* matter makes the soul pass through several births. If a soul wants to free itself from rebirth and attain salvation or *Nirvana* (a state of action-free eternal bliss) it should attain *kevala jnana* or supreme knowledge. This could be attained only by the practice of strict *ahimsa* or non-injury to a living being, renunciation of all worldly interests, charity, chastity, truth-speaking and honourable conduct. These constituted the right path or perfect conduct. Faith in Jina, knowledge of his doctrine and perfect conduct were the three jewels (*triratna*) of Jainism. Mahavira was extremely puritanic. The rejection of marriage and property as well as food and clothing were regarded as great virtues. Nudity helped one to overcome feelings of distinction and shame. Some Jains carried the doctrine of *ahimsa* to extreme lengths by sweeping the ground as they went with feather dusters and walking veiled for fear of inhaling a living organism. One who does not attain *kevala jnana* commits sins (anger, conceit, avarice, defamation, absence of self-control, etc). His soul passes through several births. Each soul must bear the consequences of its *karma*, which weighs down upon it and prevents it from rising to *Nirvana*, which is higher than the highest heaven of Hindu conception. Mahavira rejected the doctrine of divine mediation and forgiveness. In fact, the

concept of god is unknown to Jainism. In the Middle Ages however, the Jains built temples for their Tirthankaras, into which Hindu gods were also admitted though in a subordinate capacity.

Fortunes of Jainism

The above teachings of Mahavira have still remained the cardinal doctrines of Jainism. There was no important change in the faith, as in the case of Buddhism, *i.e.*, the rise of the Mahayana, which nearly transformed the original religion of the Buddha. Though Jainism did not spread beyond India it has stayed in the country. It claims about two million followers, many of whom are rich merchants. From its original home, *viz.*, the Gangetic valley, where it left no trace, Jainism spread to western India (Kathiawar, Gujerat, Rajasthan) and the South (Hyderabad, Mysore and the Tamil country). In the south its influence gradually diminished with the rise of the new devotional sects of Saivism and Vaishnavism.

The split into Digambaras and Svetambaras

For about two centuries after the death of Mahavira the Jains remained a small and insignificant community of monks and lay followers. They acquired strength, according to a Jain tradition, when Chandragupta Maurya became a Jain monk on abdication. He migrated to Sravana Belgola (Jain White Tank) in Mysore in the company of Bhadrabahu and 10,000 Jain monks and died by slow starvation. This tradition is repeated by a few late inscriptions in Mysore. The southward movement coincided with the schism in the Jain orders. Bhadrabahu, who led the exodus to the south, insisted on the rule of nudity established by Mahavira being strictly followed by all monks. Sthulabhadra, the leader of the monks, who stayed in the north, rejected this rule and

allowed his monks to wear white garments. He also permitted them to marry and enroll nuns. The two groups came to be known as Digambaras and Svetambaras respectively. There were, however, no great differences in doctrine between them. In course of time the Digambaras too began to wear clothing.

Jain literature

The Jaina canon was for a long time unwritten. About the fifth century A.D. the Digambaras and the Svetambaras formulated their own texts, which were supposed to be authorised versions of the original canon. In the Middle Ages there appeared several commentaries on the texts and secular works too. Mallinatha, the famous commentator of Kalidasa's works was a Jain. Nayachandra, a Sanskrit poet of the fourteenth century was a Jain monk. The authors of some reputed Tamil classics were also Jain monks. Like the monks of the medieval European monasteries the Jain monks considered it a religious duty to make copies of rare manuscripts and thus helped their preservation.

Jain Monachism

Jain monachism or monasticism was well-known for its rigorous discipline. It was recognised that full salvation was not possible for the layman. If one wanted to attain *nirvana* he should enter the order of monks and drive out all *karma* by study, meditation, penance, fasting and self-mortification. Meat eating, feasting, injuring or killing living beings and attachment to family or property led to rapid acquisition of *karma* and made *nirvana* inaccessible. Though the rule of nudity was given up early the Jain monk practised many austerities like a Hindu recluse, e.g., meditating in uneasy postures for a long time, exposure to extremes of climate, etc. He took the five vows of "abjuring killing, stealing, lying, sexual activity and the possession of property."

Buddhism**Life of the Buddha (567—487 B.C.)**

Siddharta of the Gautama gotra was, like Mahavira, a Kshatriya. He was the son of Suddhodana, the king of the Sakyas, a Himalayan tribe with capital at Kapliavastu. According to tradition he was born in 567 B.C. in a garden in Lumbini, near Kapilavastu, while the queen, Mahamaya, was on her way to her parents' home for her confinement. She died seven days after the birth of the child. Earlier, *i.e.*, when she had conceived, the queen had dreamt that she was carried to a divine lake in the Himalayas, where she was bathed by divine attendants, and then she saw a great white elephant with a lotus flower enter her side. Astrologers predicted that the new born child would become a universal emperor or a universal teacher. The father was keen that he should become an emperor and not a saint. Hence he kept the prince in delightful surroundings, in palaces and pleasure gardens, and carefully shut out all signs of misery. The prince married his cousin Yasodhara, whom he won in a contest of feats of strength. Devadatta, a cousin of his and one of the contestants, was greatly disappointed and became his sworn enemy.

Siddharta Gautama was not quite happy. He was conscious of the transience, suffering and mystery of life. One day as he was driving round the parks of Kapilavastu, he saw, as he was destined to see, the four signs, which were to act as the turning point of his career, *viz.*, an old man with tottering steps and bent down by age, a sick man with boils all over and shivering with fever, a corpse followed by mourners, and a mendicant friar who had renounced everything and who looked calm and happy. The first three presented the problem of life and the last a possible solution. Seeing his son ever thoughtful and grave King Suddhodana took more precautions and made him a virtual priso-

ner in his palace. One morning news reached Gautama that his wife had given birth to a son. There were great rejoicings in the palace but he did not feel happy. That night, when all were asleep, he rose up, had a last look at his sleeping wife and infant son and turned and rode off into the night. Outside the city he cut off his hair with his sword and putting on the robe of a hermit sent back his jewellery to his father through his faithful attendant, who had accompanied him. He was then twenty-nine years old.

After the "Great Renunciation" Gautama first took to a life of a wandering mendicant begging his food and then to a life of meditation in search of higher knowledge in accordance with the Upanishadic teachings. Not satisfied with that he took to rigorous penance and self-mortification in the company of five forest hermits. For six years he tortured himself and was reduced to a mere bag of bones. One day he fainted and was given up for dead. When he recovered consciousness he realised the futility of fasting and penance and once again began to beg his food. His companions left him in disgust.

One day he was seated beneath a large pipal tree on the outskirts of Gaya. After eating the rice offered to him by a peasant's daughter he began to meditate. The meditation lasted for 49 days. The gods anxiously awaited the Great Enlightenment. The evil spirits led by Mara wanted to prevent it and sought to awaken Siddharta from his meditation with all kinds of temptations. Disguised as a messenger Mara told him that his wicked cousin Devadatta had imprisoned Suddhodana and seized his kingdom and Yasodhara, but to no effect. Siddharta was unmoved by tempests, flood and earthquake. Mara's three beautiful daughters, Desire, Pleasure and Passion, tried all their wiles but could not succeed. Acknowledging failure Mara and his hosts retired. On the forty-ninth day Gautama knew the

truth, the real cause of human suffering and how it could be overcome. He had become the *Buddha* or the Enlightened. The tree under which he got enlightenment came to be known as the *Bodhi* tree.

After meditating for seven weeks under the Bodhi tree on the truths he had discovered the Buddha went to the Deer Park near Banaras (Sarnath), where his five quondam companions were continuing their penances. To them he preached his first sermon and thus set in motion the Wheel of Law (*Dharmachakra, pravartana*). The five ascetics became his first disciples. They were soon joined by fifty young ascetics, whom the Buddha sent in different directions to preach his Dharma. Soon he gathered a large following and was respected by kings. When he came to Kapilavastu his father, wife and son, and even his jealous cousin, Devadatta, became his disciples. The last plotted to kill the Buddha by letting loose a mad elephant in his path. The Buddha calmed the beast by his gentle looks and it bowed at his feet. He went alone to the den of a notorious bandit, Angulimala, who was a terror of the countryside, and by gentle persuasion weaned him from his evil ways. The earliest traditions do not attribute miracles to the Buddha. He strictly forbade his monks to perform feats of magic, though he himself once performed the feat of levitation to answer the challenge of his rival teachers. "One touching story of the Buddha is interesting in this connexion, since it contrasts strikingly with the Gospel stories of the miracles of Jesus. A woman, stricken with grief at the death of her only son, and hearing that the Buddha was in the vicinity, brought the child's corpse to him in the hope that he would restore it to life. He asked her first to go to the nearby town and bring a handful of mustard seed from a family in which no one had died. She went from house to house, but of course could find no such family, until at last she understood the

inevitability of death and sorrow, and became a nun.”*

For over forty years the Buddha preached his doctrines in peace. Neither he nor his Sangha (society) of monks had to face persecution at the hands of the rulers. At the age of eighty he died at Kusinagara.

His teachings

The Buddha gave a simple, practical moral code, free of all mysticism, for the common people to follow. In his sermons he preached the ‘Four Great Truths,’ the ‘Noble Eightfold Path,’ and the ‘Ten Commandments.’ The Four Great Truths were (i) Life is full of pain, (ii) Desire is the cause of pain, and unfulfilled desires lead to rebirth, (iii) when desire ceases rebirth ceases and that is *Nirvana* or liberation, and (iv) Desire is overcome by following the ‘Right Path.’ The Right Path was a middle path between the extremes of asceticism and sensuality. It was the ‘Noble Eightfold Path’ consisting of right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right remembrance and right meditation. The Ten Commandments or Precepts were not to kill, steal or commit adultery, not to lie, not to drink, etc. The whole emphasis was on ethical and moral living, and the concepts of god, scripture and sacrifice were not wanted. *Ahimsa* or non-injury to animals occupied an important place in his teachings. He had himself rescued several times the dumb animals intended for sacrifice. But he did not carry this doctrine to extreme lengths and give, like Mahavira, life to inanimate objects. The doctrines of *karma* and rebirth were adopted in toto from the orthodox school to emphasise the point that the evil doers could not escape the consequences of their actions. No prayer or appeals to god would help, nor the performance of sacrifice or reciting the hymns of the Vedas.

* Basham. Ibid 260.

Like Mahavira the Buddha discouraged all speculation about the origin of the universe. He did not even propound any theory of his own about the soul. He was intensely practical. His main teachings were not metaphysical but psychological. They were concerned with the immediate problem of human suffering. *Dukkha* or sorrow is due to *tanha* or thirst, i.e., craving, which was itself the result of ignorance and ego. It includes personal ambition and selfishness of all kinds. By giving up *tanha* the soul not only conquered *dukkha* in this birth but transcending *karma* and rebirth attained the final goal of *nirvana*.

After the death of the Buddha his simple teachings developed into a full-fledged religion with its own theism, mythology and metaphysics.

Buddhist monachism : the Sangha and the Vihara

The five ascetic companions of Gautama before his Enlightenment and to whom the Buddha preached his first sermon at Sarnath were duly ordained the first members of the Buddhist order or Sangha. Among the early converts the most famous were Sariputta, Mogallana, Ananda, Upali and Kasyapa. Ananda was the Buddha's cousin and favourite pupil and was nearest to him when he attained the *mahaparinirvana*. In due course hundreds, including many brahman teachers, enrolled themselves as members of the order. At the request of his step-mother, Mahayapati, and his aunt, the Buddha permitted with much misgiving the formation of a community of nuns. Many rulers, chieftains, merchants and others provided the order with land, buildings and funds and themselves often became lay disciples or *sakya-upasakas*. The great Asoka who did most to raise Buddhism from a local faith to the level of a world religion, was himself a lay disciple for two and half years before he became a *bhikshu* or monk.

After the death of the Buddha the monks of the Sangha gave up the practice of constant travel and began to settle individually or in groups near *chaityas* or sacred spots. The *chaitya* was often a grove of trees or a single tree, under which a village deity was worshipped or the ashes of a holy man were buried.* In course of time the Buddhist holy places came to be known as *chaityas*. The ashes of the Buddha were divided among his disciples, who took them to various places and raised sepulchral mounds over them called *stupas*. Asoka built *stupas* all over India utilising the ashes from a few of the original *stupas*. The grove of Lumbini, where the Buddha was born, the Bodhi tree at Gaya, beneath which he attained Enlightenment, the Deer Park near Banaras, where he delivered his first sermon, and the grove at Kusinagara, where he attained *parinirvana* became sacred places of pilgrimage. Many of the holy places developed into great centres of the Buddhist order. These were called the *Sanghas* and the *Viharas*. While the *Sangha* was an association of Buddhist monks, organized for preaching and propaganda, the *Vihara* was a monastery given to education and organization of worship.

Admission into the Buddhist *Sangha* or *Vihara* was not restricted by caste or sex but warriors, debtors, bondsmen and minors were not admitted. Twenty was the minimum age of membership. Novices from the age of eight upwards might, however, be admitted with the consent of their guardians. The nuns dwelt in separate establishments but had to undergo the same discipline as the monks†. The rites of admission included a ceremonial tonsure of the whole head, wearing three yellow robes and pronouncing

* The *chaitya* originally meant a funeral mound.

† The nunneries ceased to exist in India in the early Middle Ages but were continued in Tibet.

the Three Jewels (*Triratna*) and the Ten Commandments or Precepts. The Three Jewels were :

Buddham charanam gacchami (I go for refuge to the Buddha);

Dharmam charanam gacchami (I go for refuge to the Doctrine);

Sangam charanam gacchami (I go for refuge to the Order).

The following are the ten precepts or rules to be accepted by each monk : Abstention from injuring living beings, covetousness, sensuous living, false speech, drink, overeating, singing and dancing for pleasure, using garlands, jewelry and perfumes, using a high or broad bed, and receiving gold and silver. These rules were often strictly adhered to by the monks only for a definite duration, mostly for some months after entering the order. But the rules of chastity and poverty were to be observed till death. Every monk or nun was to be strictly celibate. Except the "three robes, a waist-cloth, an alms-bowl, a razor, a needle, and a cloth to strain his drinking water in order to save the lives of any animalculae it might contain" no monk could have anything, else which he might call his own. He should beg his food from door to door every morning. When the monasteries grew wealthy begging became a mere formality or was given up altogether. Often a monk had much wealth but he was supposed to hold it in trust for the order.

The *Sanghas* and *Viharas* did not follow any common rules of organization, nor obey common authority.* Each monastery framed its own rules in the light of the teaching of the Buddha. Within the monastery the monks enjoyed much freedom. There was no strict rule of obedience. The chief monk was often elected by the monks of the monas-

* The medieval Christian monasteries were bound together by a common allegiance to the Pope.

tery. He was aided by a committee of elder monks, which took all important decisions. It admitted and expelled members. Thus the chief monk was only a formal head. The general assembly of the monks approved the decisions of the elders.

Every fortnight, i.e., on the full moon and new moon days, an assembly of monks heard each one of them confess the breaches of rules he might have committed during the preceding fortnight. Serious breaches of conduct were heard by the committee of elders, which could expel the erring monk from the order. This ceremony, called *Upavasatha* or *Upasatha* ended with the preaching of sermons, which were listened to by the lay disciples of the vicinity.

The daily life of the monk was spent in work, study and meditation.* He had to clean his cell and sweep the courtyard. He studied the Buddhist literature and held discussions with brother-monks or his preceptor. Sitting quietly cross-legged and driving away every personal thought from his mind he meditated on the Four Sublime Moods of Love, Pity, Joy and Serenity. He meditated also on the horror and evil of life in the absence of these virtues.

Early Buddhist Literature

Not long after the death of the Buddha his disciples and followers set themselves to the task of compiling authorised versions of the teachings of the Master. The compilations which thus emerged from councils of the Buddhists were called the *Pitakas* or the Baskets of the Law. These were classified into three divisions, viz., the *Sutta Pitaka* or the book dealing with the sermons of the Buddha,† the

* The medieval Christian monk spent his time in works, study and prayer.

† *Sutta* - Pali, *Sutra* - Sanskrit.

Vinaya Pitaka or the book of conduct, and the *Abidhamma Pitaka* or the book of doctrine and metaphysics.

The first *Pitaka* is the largest and most important of the three *Pitakas*. It is divided into five groups or *Nikayas*, viz., (i) *Digha Nikaya* or a collection of "long" sermons, (ii) *Madhyama Nikaya* or a collection of "medium" or short sermons, (iii) *Samyutta Nikaya* or a collection of "connected" topics, (iv) *Anguttara Nikaya* or a collection of "graduated" or arranged topics, and (v) *Khuddaka Nikaya* or "Minor" collection. This includes the *Dhammapada* or verses on *Dharma*, *Theragatha* or Hymns of the Monks, *Therigatha* or Hymns of the Nuns, and the *Jataka Tales*, which are accounts of the previous births of the Buddha as a *Bodhisattva* (a virtuous and saintly being due to be born as the Buddha at some future date), supposed to have been narrated by the Buddha himself to his disciples. These are interesting tales, each with a moral, and fill an important place in Indian literature. All this literature is in Pali.

The compilation of the *Pitakas* was over by 241 B.C., when the third Buddhist council was held in the reign of Asoka, but they were actually reduced to writing-only in 80 B.C., in the reign of King Vattagamani in Ceylon. *Milinda Panha* or *Questions of King Milinda* is in the form of a dialogue between the Greek king Menander, who ruled over the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges from 160 to 150 B.C. and the Buddhist teacher Nagasena. This book is held to be a great authority in Ceylon, next only to the *Pitakas*. Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, a work of about 400 A.D. is an authoritative work on Hinayana Buddhism. The *Dipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa*, well-known as the Ceylonese chronicles, belonging to the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. are works of historical rather than philosophical importance.

Buddhism after the Buddha

The Three Councils

The First Council of Buddhist monks met according to tradition, at Rajagriha, the capital of Magadha soon after the death of the Buddha. In this council Ananda recited the *Sutta Pitaka* or the collection of the sermons of the Buddha as he recalled having heard them from his mouth. In the same way Upali recited the *Vinaya Pitaka* or the collection of the rules of conduct of the monastic order. The Second Council is said to have been held at Vaisali a hundred years after the death of the Buddha. Here differences arose probably over matters of discipline leading to a schism. The monks came to be divided into two groups, viz., the *Theravadins* (those who followed the Elders) and the *Mahasanghikas* (those who followed the Great Community of monks). The Third Council met at Pataliputra under the patronage of Asoka, who put down the schism. He recognised the Theravadin school as orthodox and expelled the heretics. He thus made the order united and strong.

Patronage by Asoka

Asoka (274—237 B.C.) became a Buddhist in 261 B.C. the year of his conquest of Kalinga. After remaining a lay disciple for two and a half years he became a monk in 259 B.C. He not only strengthened the Sanga against division and internal discussions but by means of his edicts and missions spread the new faith throughout his empire and even beyond. In his famous Rock and Pillar Edicts he commended the teachings of the Buddha—the Buddha Dharma—to his people. He asked them to follow the principles of *ahimsa*, *susrusha* or obedience and *apaciti* or respect to parents, elders, teachers and wise men, *sampratipatti* or proper treatment of dependents, servants and the poor, *daya* or kindness, *satyam* or truthfulness, *saucham* or purity of the mind and body.

mardhavam or gentleness, *sadhya* or saintliness, *samyama* or self control, etc. He sent Buddhist missions to the kingdoms of the Chola and the Pandya and to Ceylon, Syria, Egypt and Greece. The most successful of the missions was the one sent to Ceylon under the head of his own son and daughter, Mahendra and Sangamitra. The natives of Ceylon have remained Buddhist ever since.

As a result of Asoka's encouragement Buddhism, which was originally confined to the Gangetic valley, spread throughout India and Ceylon. Following the example of Asoka many princes, chieftains, merchants, craftsmen and others made donations to the *Sanghas* in the various parts of the country and the monasteries grew rich.

Though Asoka put down schism, later on different sects appeared within the orthodox school (*Hinayana*). One sect was that of the *Sarvastivadins*, i.e., those who held that everything was real. The *Theravadins* held that *nirvana* was the only reality. The *Sautrantikas* maintained that our knowledge of the world was only a matter of inference.

The Graeco-Bactrian Menander (160—150 B.C.), who ruled over north-west India, evinced a keen interest in Buddhism and encouraged the Buddhists. From the *Milinda-Panha* we learn that he held conversations with Nagasena, the greatest Buddhist monk of his time, and himself became a Buddhist. When he died the Buddhists fought for his ashes.

The Growth of the Mahayana Doctrine

Early Buddhism did not deal with the concept of god. The simpler folk, however, offered worship to the symbols of the Buddha, viz., the *stupa*, recalling his *parinirvana*, and the tree, recalling his Enlightenment. The worship was carried out in the traditional fashion with circumambulation, prostration and offering of flowers. The Buddhist

carvings at Bharhut and Sanchi (second and first centuries B.C.) include representations of crowds worshipping such symbols. In the course of a few generations worship came to be offered to images of the Buddha himself. Like the Hindus the Buddhists began to worship the Buddha images with flowers, lamps and incense. Besides the Buddha there were many *Bodhisattvas*, who were also worshipped with incense and flowers. These were semi-divine beings, who were destined to be born as the Buddha at some future date, after several transmigrations. Gautama Buddha himself was a *Bodhisattva* in his previous births. The *Bodhisattvas* looked after the welfare of the common folk and helped them to become *Bodhisattvas* in their turn. They were kind and merciful and were always ready to answer prayer. In order to guide the uninitiated in leading lives of virtue they were sometimes incarnated as men and even animals. Buddhism, like the orthodox faith, thus came to possess its own mythology, its own heaven with its chief god, the Buddha, and numerous minor gods, the *Bodhisattvas*. Worship of these gods was said to provide a better vehicle to the lay folk to attain salvation or *nirvana* and hence the neo-Buddhism came to be called *Mahayana* or the Great Vehicle, while the older faith of the Buddha with its emphasis on the Four Truths, the Eightfold Path and the Ten Precepts came to be known as the *Hinayana* or the Lesser Vehicle.

The chief *Bodhisattvas* of Mahayana mythology are (i) Avalokitisvara, also called Padmapani, who is the lord of compassion, and whose helping hand reaches even the worst sinner. (ii) Manjusri or the lord of learning, who holds in one hand a sword to destroy ignorance and falsehood and in the other a book describing the great virtues or "perfections of insight" (*prajnaparamitas*) like charity, good conduct, calmness of mind, courage, meditation, strength of

body, knowledge etc. ; (iii) Vajrapani, the foe of all evil and sin and who wields the thunderbolt ; (iv) Kshitigarbha, the lord of hell, who punishes the sinners as gently as possible and helps them earn a remittance of sentence ; and (v) Maitreya, the *Bodhisattva* due to be born as the Buddha. While the Hinayana school said that each soul must face the full consequences of its *karma* and that no prayer or appeal to gods would be of any help, the Mahayana school was more optimistic. It accepted divine pardon and inter-mediation. While accepting the Buddha's statement that life is full of sorrow it said that the world contains much good too and that there is help for those who ask. Even a worm could become a *Bodhisattva*, attain *nirvana* and hope to be born a Buddha.

The heaven of Mahayana Buddhism is called Sukhavati or "Happy Land." Here the souls of the blessed are reborn in the buds of lotuses in a beautiful lake, which lies in all serenity before the throne of the Buddha, who after attaining *nirvana* has become Amitabha ("Immeasurable Glory"). At the touch of the Amitabha the lotuses open and deliver the blessed souls, which are nourished by his word. In his task of ruling over the heaven Amitabha is mainly assisted by Avalokitisvara. The Mahayanists recognised in course of time, heavens other than Sukhavati and divine Buddhas other than Amitabha. They also developed the doctrine that the great Buddha, in his Body of Essence (*Dharmakaya*) absorbed the blessed souls in himself. He was the *Tathaghatagarbha* or the "Womb of those who attain the Goal." He was also called *Adi-Buddha*. His attributes are void (*sunya*), truth (*tattva*) and wisdom (*bodhi*). To be absorbed into him is to attain *nirvana*. Thus the old Upanishadic teaching of *Brahman* and *Atman*, of the individual soul attaining salvation by realising its identity with the universal soul, which was rejected by early Buddhism,

found its way back into later Buddhism, under a new name. Ideas of heaven and hell, image worship with *mantra* and *tantra* (ritual), *bhakti* or devotion, divine pardon and monism, which were adopted by Mahayanism, Hinduised Buddhism to a great extent. It was still distinguished, however, by its monastic organization.

Kanishka and the Fourth Buddhist Council

When Kanishka was the king of the Kushan empire (78—120 A.D.) the new ideas of Mahayanism were already fairly established. He summoned the Fourth Buddhist Council at Kundalavana in Kashmir. It was attended by 500 monks and presided over by Vasumitra and Asvaghosa. This Council discussed the Buddhist canon in all its aspects, settled differences and wrote down the *Mahavibhasha*, an encyclopaedia of Mahayana philosophy, in the shape of commentaries on the *Tripitakas*.

Mahayana sects

Just as there appeared different sects within the orthodox school of *Hinayana* despite Asoka's attempt to preserve unity, the *Mahayana* too was subject to schism. The two chief divisions of the Mahayana school were the *Madhyamika* and the *Yogachara* sects. Nagarjuna, a contemporary of Kanishka and the greatest exponent of the *Madhyamika* philosophy, held that the *samsara* (world) and the *nirvana* (heaven) were both unreal. The only reality was *sunyata* (void or emptiness). With great subtlety he argued that in it lay "final immeasurable bliss" that it could be attained by anyone who cared, in his life, in this world. The *Yogacharins*, also called *Vijnanavadins*, held that the world was as unreal as a dream. Their reality was neither *nirvana* nor *sunyata* but an entity called *Dharmadhatu*. Though less influential than the *Madhyamika* school of philosophy, the *Yogachara* school had many famous exponents

like the brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu. The latter was a trusted adviser of Sumudragupta (330—380 A.D.) Dingnaga and Dharmakirti were logicians.

Decline of Buddhism at home

The coming of the Mahayana sounded the death knell of Buddhism in India. Immediately it made it more acceptable and popular in many parts of the country but in course of time it led to lax discipline in the monasteries. The monks indulged in metaphysical speculation and hair-splitting arguments, frowned upon by the Buddha, and paid much attention to rituals. The common people saw no great difference between the old and the new faiths. The Buddhist monks took part in Hindu processions and lay Buddhists employed Hindu priests to officiate during some domestic ceremonies like birth of a child and marriage. While the Buddhists copied the Hindu pantheon and ideas of *swarga* and *naraka*, the Hindus regarded the Buddha as the ninth of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Buddhism thus lost its individuality.

Loss of royal patronage is another cause of the decline of Buddhism in India. After Asoka the Sungas and the Guptas encouraged the orthodox Brahmanical religion. They performed the Asvamedha sacrifice according to the Vedic rites. They worshipped Vishnu and brought out authorized versions of the *puranas* and the *Dharmasastras* for the edification of the common people. Fa-Hein, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, who visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II (380—415 A.D.), has recorded that the "Middle Country" (*i.e.*, the Gangetic valley), which was the cradle of Buddhism, was "the land of the Brahmans." Hindu sacrifices, Vedic studies, the use of Sanskrit and Hindu practices as a whole had asserted themselves over Buddhist practices and professions. In many places great Buddhist

monasteries and places of pilgrimage were in ruins and almost deserted. A few centres like Nalanda, however, continued to flourish. The Guptas favoured the orthodox faith but they did nothing against the interests of Buddhist institutions. Harsha (606—647 A.D.) gave a grand welcome to Hiuen Tsang, the second important Chinese Buddhist pilgrim to visit India, and patronised the Nalanda university.

Persecution, however, was not entirely unknown. The Huns, who uprooted the Gupta empire towards the close of the fifth century A.D. were anti-Buddhists. Mihirakula, who ruled over North-west India including Kashmir in the first half of the sixth century was a worshipper of Siva. He destroyed almost all Buddhist monasteries in his kingdom and killed the monks. Sasanka, the enemy of Harsha during his early years, was a fanatical Saivite king of Bengal, who put down Buddhism in his kingdom. In the course of an invasion he almost destroyed the Bodhi tree at Gaya.

Another cause of the decline of Buddhism was the renaissance of Hinduism which began to spread northwards from the south from the ninth century onwards, when Sankara (788—820) began to reassert the great teachings of the Upanishads. Travelling through the length and breadth of the country he held disputations with Buddhist theologians and left behind him a vigorous organization of *mutts* and ascetics to spread the orthodox faith centering round the worship of Siva. Both Saivite and Vaishnavite preachers of the age, beginning from the *Adiyars* and *Alwars* of the Tamil country, who emphasised complete devotion to Siva and Vishnu respectively, prevailed first against Buddhist influence with the rulers and finally succeeded in weaning away the masses from Buddhism.

The remnants of Buddhism in India, largely concentrated in Nalanda and other great universities of Bihar, were

swept away in the course of the eastern expansion of Muslim power from Delhi in the last years of the twelfth century. The monasteries, temples, idols and libraries were broken or burnt and the monks given to the sword. The few monks who escaped with life retired to Nepal or Tibet.

Expansion of Buddhism abroad

Hinayana Buddhism, which was first carried to Ceylon by the Asokan mission, remained Hinayana and resisted all the attacks of the Mahayana school. From Ceylon Hinayana Buddhism travelled to Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia and became the national religion of these countries. Mahayana, which became the predominant type of Buddhism in India, was carried by a succession of monks to China *via* Central Asia, where the chief centres of Buddhism were Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan, Kuchi and Shan Shan. From China it spread to Korea and Japan. Tibet was converted to Buddhism in the eighth century by Padmasambhava, a monk of Nalanda.

Vajrayana

The development of the doctrine of *Vajrayana* or the Vehicle of the Thunderbolt belongs to the days of degenerate Buddhism. It was patronised by the Pala kings, who ruled over Bengal and Bihar in the eleventh century. The monks of the *Vajrayana* school did not think in terms of self-discipline and meditation to overcome selfishness (*Hinayana*) or of self-discipline aided by the grace of the *Bodhisattvas* (Mahayana) in order to attain salvation but sought to get it by the short cut of magical practices. They sought to obtain magical power or *vajra* by the practice of *tantra* or ritual, pronouncement of *mantra* or formula and the employment of *yantra* or magical symbols. The text books

describing the rules concerned were called *Tantras* and *Vajrayana* is sometimes called *tantric* Buddhism.

The object of the Tantriccists was not to pray for salvation to the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas but to compel them to bestow magical power and show the way to the highest bliss. For this purpose the goddesses, it was thought, could be better approached than the gods. Thus a number of female deities were recognised. They were mostly called *Taras* or wives of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. There were also lesser female divinities called *Matangis*, *Yoginis*, *Dakinis* etc. In his meditation a monk might hypnotise himself into thinking that he was at first the son of a *Tara* or a *Matangi* and that he killed his father to take his place. In the ritual sexual union of a monk with a nun the partners became a Bodhisattva and his *Tara* respectively. In sexual rites there was no taboo. "Even incest was permitted, for what was sin to the ignorant was virtue to the initiate. Drinking of alcohol, meat-eating, killing of animals and sometimes even of human beings—every imaginable sin—were practised at the tantric covens."*

Mahayana literature

While Pali was the language of early Buddhist or Hinayana literature the language of the Mahayana was Sanskrit. The Mahayanists had their own lengthy compilations of the sermons of the Buddha called the *Vaipulya Sutras* to replace the *Tripitaka* scriptures. The *Lalitavistara* is an exciting account of the life of the Buddha containing much more supernatural element than the older Pali account. The

* Basham Ibid. P. 281. Some aspects of Tantric Buddhism found their way into Tibet, where the sacred mantra, the *sadakshara*, *Om mani padme hum* ('the Jewel is in the Lotus') is written and chanted thousands of times daily. The formula, originally applied to the Buddha on the Lotus, came to have a sexual significance, and represented the divine intercourse of Avalokitisvara and his *Tara*.

Mahayana school produced several works dealing with conduct, metaphysics, heaven, and divine grace. The *Saddharma-pundarika* or the "Lotus of the Good Law", the *Vajracchedika* or "Diamond Cutter," dealing with metaphysics, the *Sukhavati-vyuha*, describing the glory of Aymitabha and his paradise, and *Karanda-vyuha*, describing the grace of Avalokitisvara, are some important works.

SECTION IV

Scepticism, Agnosticism and Materialism

While Mahavira and Buddha ignored the gods and condemned ritualism and metaphysical speculation they were not atheists and materialists. They accepted some ideas of souls, transmigration and heaven. But there were in the ancient period some thinkers who refused to believe the teachings of the Vedas, held that nothing can be known of the life after death or of god and that life is meant for enjoyment and not penance.

Materialist doctrines

Ajita Kesakambalin was an ascetic, who was a contemporary of the Buddha. He had his own following of monks. He declared that when a man dies he is reduced to ashes and nothing survives. Those who speak of immaterial objects are fools. The simple pleasures of life are to be cultivated unceasingly. The materialists were called Charvakas or Lokayatas. They came in for much criticism at the hands of the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain writers of the early centuries of the Christian era. They feared that the materialists' opposition to religious practices, rules of morality, alms-giving and metaphysical theories would undermine people's faith in the established schools of religion. Their fears, however, did not materialise.

SECTION V

Post-Vedic or Popular Hinduism

The words *India* and *Hindu* are derived from the same root *Sindhu*, the name of the river, which the first invaders of Aryan India, viz., the Greeks, first met. Hinduism thus refers to the religion and culture of the Aryans, who inhabited the land of the Indus. The oldest Aryan brahmanical religion of the Vedas and the Upanishads was dominated by sacrificial ritualism and metaphysical speculation. Two factors, which played a great part in converting the Brahmanic Hinduism of old into popular or Puranic Hinduism, which was well established in the age of the Guptas, were Buddhism and Dravidianism. Under fire of Buddhist criticism and following the propagandist Jain and Buddhist legends of the Tirthankaras and Bodhisattvas the Hindus came out, in the age of the Guptas, with their own puranas, perhaps older traditions now in their fully developed form, to stabilise popular faith in the Hindu pantheon, which received important additions from the Dravidian faiths of the south. Below is a short account of the Hindu pantheon, its cosmology, its theory of the soul, systems of philosophy and its ethics.

The Hindu pantheon : Anthropomorphism*Vishnu and Siva : Vaishnavism and Saivism*

Anthropomorphism, i.e., attributing human form and qualities to gods, was the dominant feature of the growth of Hinduism in the post-Vedic age. Vasudeva was perhaps the earliest personal god who became important. He seems to have been first worshipped in western India and soon came to be identified with Vishnu. His cult was so important that a foreign ambassador (a Greek) erected a pillar in his honour. This is the famous pillar at Besnagar in Gwalior, which contains the following inscription : " This pillar is dedicated to

Vasudeva, the god of gods, by Heliodorus, the son of Dion, a worshipper of Vishnu, and an inhabitant of Taxila, who came as the Greek ambassador from the great king Antialcidas (of Syria) to king Kasiputra Bhagabhadra, the saviour." Bhaga was one of the Sunga kings, who ruled over Magadha during 185-31 B.C. Vishnu was a minor god in the Vedic pantheon. With the evolution of personal gods he rose to the first place as the guardian of human welfare (the great preserver). Narayana, a minor god, first mentioned in the Brahmanas, also came to be identified with Vishnu. Krishna was either a hero or a pastoral flute playing deity, popular among herdsmen, who came to be worshipped as a god by a large circle and regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu. Similarly Rama, a prince, acquired a divine status, and was regarded as another incarnation of Vishnu.

The ten incarnations or *avatars* of Vishnu in their traditional chronological order are the *Matsya* (Fish), the *Kurma* (Tortoise), the *Varaha* (Boar), the *Narasimha*, the *Vamana*, *Parasurama*, *Rama*, *Krishna*, *Buddha* and *Kalkin*. Vishnu, the universal god, who sleeps in the primeval ocean on the thousand-headed divine snake *Adhishesha*, and from whose navel sprang Brahma, took these incarnations (except the last, which is yet to come) to save the earth from the forces of evil. Thus as a fish he rescued the earth when it was swept away by a great flood, not long after its creation by Brahma at his command. As a tortoise he rescued from the flood the *amrita* or divine nectar and other treasures including the goddess Lakshmi. In the form of a boar he rescued the earth once again when the demon Hiran-yaksha cast it into the primeval ocean. Hiranyakasipu was another demon, who had obtained a boon from Brahma that he would be killed neither by day nor night, by god, nor man nor beast. Thus armed he persecuted the gods and

men, including his own pious son, Prahlada. As Narasimha or Man-lion Vishnu appeared one day at sunset and slew the demon. In the form of a dwarf he obtained as gift from Bali, an ascetic but insolent demon, land just enough to be covered in three strides. Assuming then his gigantic form he measured out with his three strides, earth, heaven and air and then consigned the demon to the netherworld. As Parasurama ('Rama with the axe'), Vishnu was born as the son of a Brahmana ascetic Jamadagni, who was killed by the sons of the king Kartavirya. In rage Parasurama exterminated the whole class of Kshatriyas. As Rama, the great god not only saved the world from the demon Ravana but demonstrated to the laymen what an ideal son or husband or brother should be. The Krishna incarnation is assigned to the aeon that has just passed, viz., the *dvapara yuga*, while Rama is assigned to the previous *treta yuga*. As a child, youth and adult Krishna demonstrated his divinity, killed demons and evil men and helped the rightful persons. As the charioteer of the Pandava hero Arjuna, he gave out the *Bhagavadgita* explaining the essence of one's *dharma*. The Buddha incarnation belongs to the *Kali* age. According to the orthodox view Vishnu took this *avatara* to delude the wicked into denying the Vedas and thus ensure their damnation, but it is obvious that this refers to none other than the historical Buddha. The *Gita-Govinda* of Jayadeva (twelfth century) states that Vishnu came as the Buddha out of compassion for the animals to save them from being sacrificed. As *Kalki* Vishnu will appear at the end of the *Kali* age as a horseman carrying a flaming sword to punish the wicked and reward the virtuous. He will also restore the golden age or *krita yuga*.

Of these incarnations those of Rama, Krishna and Narasimha are worshipped in subsidiary as well as in a few main shrines. For the high god Vishnu there are numer-

ous great temples. Lakshmi is his spouse and is regarded as the goddess of wealth. In his four arms he bears the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus. Garuda, the divine eagle is his vehicle. Once the world is created he wakes up, leaves his home in the cosmic ocean and comes to dwell in Vaikunta, the highest heaven.

Siva is not mentioned among the Vedic gods. The name meaning 'benevolent', is said to have been applied to the fierce storm-god Rudra, with a view to soften his nature. He is known to the pre-Aryan Harappa culture. His characteristics and associations are peculiarly non-Aryan and offer an interesting contrast with those of Vishnu. The faiths and followings of the two gods are mutually exclusive. Siva is not usually represented in his temples by a human image but by the phallic emblem, *i.e.*, the *linga*. He is the god of death and destruction. In popular imagination he visits burial grounds and battle-fields and is attended by ghosts and demons. His body is smeared with ashes and is decked by a garland of skulls. His neck is blackened by the deadly poison, which emerged from the cosmic ocean when it was churned by the gods and the demons and which he swallowed to save the other gods. Snakes entwine his neck and arms. The crescent moon adorns his matted locks, from which flows the sacred Ganges. Thus he sits, his eyes closed, on the Himalayan mount, Kailas, in deep meditation. In the middle of his forehead is his third eye, which would open only to destroy when he is in rage. His wife is Parvathi and his vehicle is the bull (Nandi). Accredited Saivite lore does not speak of a cycle of Siva *avatars*. While in most temples he is worshipped as a *linga*, in a few there are in addition images in human form, *e.g.*, Pasupati, Nataraja, Dakshinamurti and Somasundara. As Pasupati he protects the animals. As Nataraja (Lord of Dance) he keeps the rythm of the world. Siva knows 108 forms of

dance, some gentle and some fierce. The *urdhva-tandava* is his wild cataclysmic dance. As Dakshinamurti (south-facing) Siva undertakes the role of the universal teacher. As Somasundara he married Minakshi, the daughter of a Pandyan king of Madurai.

Vishnu (Hari) and Siva (Hara) were the two high gods of the Hindu pantheon and the rest, gods and goddesses, were regarded as minor. This was the result of a long process of syncretism. For a time the cult of the three high gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva (Trimurti), was popular, but it lost its influence, when Brahma came to be regarded as a creature of Vishnu. While the followers of the two schools of Vaishnavism and Saivism do not meet on any common ground the more intelligent among the rival schools have always realised that the two gods are indeed one and the same. The cult of Hari-hara is well known and the Vijayanagar kings built a few temples for him.

The literature of the post-Vedic period, viz., the epics (the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*), the Puranas ('old world legends'), the *Dharmasastras*, commentaries on the Vedic texts, and devotional poems are woven round Vishnu and Siva and are intended to explain their greatness to the laymen. Both the epics seem to be secular in origin and they acquired religious importance in course of time. It is now believed that the *Mahabharata* is based upon events, which are historical. The *Harivamsa*, which appears as an appendix to the *Mahabharata* deals with the life of Krishna. The *Vayu*, *Bhagavata*, *Agni* and *Bhavishya* puranas, the most important among the eighteen *mahapuranas*, were all edited during the Gupta period. The *Gita-Govinda* of the Bengali poet Jayadeva (twelfth century), is a collection of religious songs on Krishna of high literary merit. In the Middle Ages several *stotras* or hymns of praise were composed.

To counter the influence of the Buddhist and Jain monks in South India there appeared important Hindu revivalist movements, both Vaishnavite and Saivite. The Vaishnavite *Alvars*, twelve in number (second to the ninth centuries), sang the *Nalayiraprabandam* (Four thousand verses) and the Saivite *Nayanars* or *Adiyars*, sixty-three in number, sang numerous hymns, arranged in eleven books, the *Tirumurai*, of which the *Thevaram* of the three Nayanars, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar (seventh to the ninth centuries), are the most important.

Lesser gods, goddesses, deities, spirits etc.

Among the lesser gods Hanuman, the friend and servant of Rama, and Skanda and Ganesa, sons of Siva, are the most important. They are sometimes worshipped in lesser shrines attached to the temples of Vishnu or Siva and sometimes in their own right. Skanda is also known as Kumara or Kartikeya in the north and as Muruga or Subramanya in the south. Murugan was originally a mountain god of the Tamils, later identified with Skanda. Indra, Varuna, Yama and Kubera presided over the four quarters, viz., the east, west, south and north respectively. In the epics and puranas Indra is regarded as the chief of the demi-gods, *gandharvas*, *kinnaras* and *apsarases*, occupying one of the lower heavens. Yama is the stern divine judge who punishes the dead for their sins. Varuna is the god of rain and Kubera of riches. In the middle ages further *digpalas* or 'guardians of the quarters' were added, viz., Soma (moon), Vayu, Agni and Surya, who presided over the north-east, the north-west, the south-east and south-west respectively. Kama or Manmata was the god of love. He was burnt to ashes when he tried to rouse the passion of the ascetic Siva towards Parvati, and was restored to life at the entreaties of his wife Rati.

The worship of the Mother-goddess, conceived as Sakti, was known to the Harappa culture and has survived to this day in the worship of Durga or Amba or Ambika. Ushas, the only goddess mentioned in the Rig Veda, did not gain in importance. The true goddesses of worship belong to the age of the epics and the puranas. They are Lakshmi, goddess of fortune and wife of Vishnu, Parvati or Uma, the wife of Siva, and Sarasvati or the goddess of learning and wife of Brahma. Each village had its own local goddess or village deity. The village goddesses guarded the villages and protected them against the attacks of epidemics and diseases.

The *Yakshas* and *Yakshinis*, who attended on Kubera, the *Gandharvas*, *Kinnaras* and *Apsarases*, who attended on Indra, the *Nagas* and *Naginis* who were the serpent goddesses and who inhabited the underworld of serpents, and the *Vidhyadharas* were the demigods, who occupied an intermediary position between gods and men. All these were benevolent towards men except the *Yakshinis*, who were regarded as evil spirits (female). The *Gandharvas* and *Kinnaras* were divine musicians and the *Vidhyadharas* divine magicians, while the *Apsarases* were the beautiful dancers of Indra's court, who were sometimes employed by the jealous gods to tempt ascetics in their penance.

The *Rishis* or seers were men who had attained an almost divine status by virtue of their wisdom, knowledge and asceticism. Some of them became stars or planets. Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Kritu, Pulaha, and Vasishta became the stars of the Great Bear (*Sapta-rishi mandala*). Dhruva, the boy-sage, became the Pole-star. Brihaspati, the most learned among the rishis, was the teacher of gods and demons and is identified with the planet Jupiter. Kasyapa, Vishwamitra, Narada and Agastya were the other important sages, who came to be venerated.

Hindu Cosmology

According to the Puranas the world passes through a series of cycles for all eternity. The shortest cycle is called a *Yuga*, and there are four *Yugas*, viz., the *Krita*, the *Treta*, the *Dwapara* and the *Kali*. The present *Yuga*, i.e., the *Kali yuga*, began in 3102 B.C., when the *Mahabharata* war came to a close and Krishna died. It lasts for 4,32,000 years. The *Dwapara* lasts twice the length, the *Treta* four times and the *Krita* eight times that of the *Kali yuga*. From the *Kriti* to the *Kali* there is not only a reduction in the length of the aeon but a progressive decline in human longevity, piety, morality, strength, stature and happiness. At the end of each *yuga* the world is destroyed by flood and created afresh. Four *Yugas* make one *mahayuga* and seventeen *mahayugas* one *manvantara* or reign of Manu, the legendary king. Fourteen *manvantaras* make one *Kalpa* which is equal to Brahma's day (i.e., day time, the night lasting another *Kalpa*.) Brahma lives for a hundred years, and after his death a new creator is created by Vishnu.

The theory of the soul

Karma and transmigration

The Upanishadic theories of *karma* and transmigration have continued to this day without change and have powerfully exercised the thought of the Hindu. The subtle matter called soul leaves the body on death and its future birth is determined by its past action or *karma*. It has no sense organs, including mind, and hence, except in the case of certain advanced souls, e.g., those of the *rishis* or *munis*, cannot remember the past or previous births. Transmigration whether based on *punya* (good) or *papa* (evil deeds), is endless. Escape from the cycle of rebirths or *samsara* was an eternal quest of the Hindu mind, as much as it was with the Buddhist or Jain.

The six systems of philosophy

Six systems of attaining *mukti* or *moksha* or salvation, i.e., escape from the cycle of rebirths (*samsara*), came to be recognised by the Hindus in the Gupta age if not earlier. These were known as *Shaddarsana* or the 'Six Doctrines, viz., the *Nyaya*, the *Vaiseshika*, the *Sankhya*, the *Yoga*, the *Mimamsa* and the *Vedanta*.

(1) The *Nyaya* school or the school of logic held that clear thinking and logical or faultless argument were indispensable to the realisation of the highest bliss or salvation. The fundamentals of this doctrine were laid by Akshapada Gautama, who probably lived in the beginning of the Christian era.

(2) The *Vaiseshika* school or the 'school of *viseshas*' or individual characteristics held that salvation depends on a clear understanding of the difference between matter and soul. The best known exponent of this school was Prasastapada who belonged to the fifth century A.D. The world according to this school, is composed of atoms, which combine to form elements. Each element has its own individual characteristics. Soul, mind, time and space are non-atomic substances. The future of the soul depends on the material elements with which it comes into contact. The *Nyaya* and *Vaiseshika* schools are actually theories of the knowledge of logic and physics rather than of religion.

(3) The school of the *Sankhya* (i.e., 'Count') recognised 25 *tattvas* or principles of which matter (*prakriti*) and soul (*purusha*) were two. The others were intelligence (*buddhi*) self-consciousness (*ahankara*), ether (*akasa*), water, the five senses viz., touch, taste, sight, hearing and smell, speech, walking etc. All these emanate from the first *tattava*, viz., matter, while the last *tattava*, viz., the *Purusha* or the soul is independent of the rest. There are infinite varieties of souls. Matter itself may be *sattvic* (virtuous), *rajasic* (pas-

sionate) or *tamasic* (dull). In different objects they may be found in combinations of varying degrees. Souls do come into contact with matter and their salvation depends upon their keeping their distinct identity. The *Sankhyakārika* of Isvarakrishna, belonging to the fourth century, A.D. is the earliest known text of this school.

(4) The *Yoga* school or the school of spiritual discipline teaches one how to attain superhuman power, and through it salvation, by a rigid practice of concentration on god, who is not the creator but the exalted soul, which has kept itself completely aloof from matter. This was symbolized by the sacred syllable *Om*. Following the example of the *rishis* of old, a *yogi*, i.e., one who practises *yoga*, must adopt and strictly follow some moral rules like *ahimsa*, truthfulness, chastity etc. and some rules of doing penance like sitting in a particular posture (*asana*), e.g., *padmasana*, control of breath (*pranayama*), mental concentration (*dharana*), e.g., fixing the gaze on the tip of the nose or closing the eyes and repeating the syllable *Om*. These help meditation (*dhyana*) and finally the *yogi* passes into a state of deep meditation or *samadhi*. In this state his latent psychic power called *kundalini* situated in a wheel (*chakra*) behind the genitals, is aroused and it passes up through the vein called *susumna*, through five more wheels to the great psychic centre in the brain (*sahasrara*) and then he attains superhuman power and knowledge. The text of the *yoga* school is the *yoga-sutras* of Patanjali (second century B.C.)

(5) The *Mimamsa* school or the school of Vedic enquiry regards Vedic studies as the first steps to salvation. The *Sutras* of Jaimini (second century B.C.), the earliest text of this school set out that the Vedas are sacred, eternal and the only authority for mankind. Sabharaswamin (sixth century) was a great *mimamsa* scholar, who developed his own logic and dialectics to defend the authority of the Vedas.

(6) The school of the *Vedanta* is the most important school of Hindu philosophy. Its basic text is the *Brahma-sutras* of Badarayana (about the second century A.D.) It is a living school and the well known modern teachers and scholars of Hinduism, viz., Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose and Radhakrishnan belong to it. Its doctrines are drawn from the Upanishads. Its different sub-schools represent different interpretations of the mystical Upanishadic statements. The classical exponent of the Vedanta is Sankara (eighth century). He evolved a consistent monistic doctrine from the Upanishads and accepted the dictum of the Mimamsa that the Vedas furnish the only unquestionable authority.

Sankara

Sankara was a Saivite Brahman of Kerala, who during his short span of 32 years (c. 788—820), travelled all over India, developed a school of monism, *advaita*, wrote extensive commentaries on the *Brahma Sutras* and the Upanishadic texts explaining his philosophical doctrines, founded *mutts* and established an order of monks. To establish the Upanishadic dictum of one ultimate reality he declared that the world is unreal, an illusion or *maya*, a figment of the imagination. The individual soul and the universal soul are one and the same and salvation lies in realising this truth. This can be realised only through the highest knowledge or *jnana* and *jnana* is obtained through meditation.

The lay man's means of salvation.

The Bhakti cult. Ramanuja and Madhwa

While the six orthodox *darsanas* or philosophical doctrines mentioned above required either a special training of the mind or a special training of the body or both or a high intellect, a simple philosophy for the lay man was not long

coming. A philosophy of *bhakti* or devotion was first developed by the Vaishnavite *Bhagavata* and *Pancharatra* schools, which centred round the worship of Krishna and his family (his brother Sankarshana, his son Pradyumna and his grand son Aniruddha). The worshippers accepted that the individual soul ultimately unites with God, but still it has its individuality. Even while uniting with God it enjoys the bliss of union as a separate entity. The individual soul is separate and yet it is one with god. This is an eternal paradox and has to be accepted as such. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna reveals himself to Arjuna in his transcendent form and at once Arjuna falls to his feet in fear and reverence to the mighty lord. The devotional hymns of the Alvars and the Adiyars, viz., the *Prabandam* and the *Thevaram* hymns, are the outpourings of the individual soul yearning for union with god. In one hymn it is a repentent sinner who cries out in agony to be saved from damnation. In another it is a pitiable cry of a love-lorn lady for the company of her lover. Sometimes the devotee calls for the god just as a mother would cajole her child. Here is no intellectual exercise or asceticism.

"A sinner, I have left the way of love and service ;
Too well have I known the meaning of sickness and
pain ;
I will go now and worship ; how foolish have I been ;
How long can I be parted from my pearl,
My mighty jewel, my diamond, Lord of the shrine of
Arur."

(a *Thevaram* song of Sundarar)

“I own neither village nor lands ; I have neither friends
nor relatives ;
I have not been thy devotee, O Most Supreme One,
Krishna of the hue of the clouds, I cry in despair ;
Who else is my saviour but you, who dwell in Arangam.”

(a *Prabandam* song of Tondaradippodi Alvar)

Though he advocated the *jnana marga* or the path of knowledge Sankara was not unaware of the need of the common man. For him he composed a few fine devotional poems. The man who systematised the new philosophy of devotionism and tried to harmonize it with the Upanishads was Ramanuja, who belongs to the early part of the twelfth century (his traditional date being 1017—1137). He wrote commentaries on the *Brahma Sutras*, the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad Gita*, travelled widely and established his *mutt* at Srirangam. He declared that the *bhakti marga* was better than the *jnana marga*. The individual soul is no doubt a fragment of god and it goes back to him, but it maintains its separate identity. It finds bliss not in union with Him but in being near Him. For this reason, Ramanuja's system was called *Visishtadvaita* or 'qualified monism.' The doctrine of salvation by devotion later on gave rise to two sects among the south Indian Vaishnavas. The difference lay over the effort to be taken by the devotee. The northern school (*Vadakalai*), with headquarters at Kancheepuram, held that some effort on the part of the devotee was necessary, just as the young monkey clings to the belly of the mother (*markata-nyaya*). The southern school (*Tenkalai*), with headquarters at Srirangam, held that the devotee has only to wait to be saved, just as the cat picks up her kitten in her mouth (*marjara-nyaya*).

Madhwa, a Kannada theologian of Udipi, who lived and preached in the thirteenth century, gave logical completion to the doctrine of Bhakti. He was the author of several works including commentaries on the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*. He broke completely away from the monistic theories (absolute or qualified) and preached dualism. Vishnu, individual souls and matter are eternally and completely distinct from one another. The individual soul is entirely at the mercy of Vishnu, who saves deserving souls

by his grace. Virtuous souls attain *mukti* and the evil souls are condemned to a perpetual purgatory while the mediocres pass through a succession of births. The easiest way of saving oneself was to lead a pure and moral life coupled with wholehearted devotion to Krishna.

Hindu ethics

Hindu thought was not totally other-worldly. It was as much concerned with right living as with salvation. It was early realised that penance and asceticism are not the only virtues and *moksha* the only end of man. There were other aims, viz., *dharma* or the right type of religious living as explained in the *Dharmasastras*, *artha* or earning wealth by honest means and *kama* or enjoyment of the worldly pleasures. While trying to live the ideal or best life the Hindu was not guided by what in modern terms may be stated as purely rational or secular motives. Hindu ethics, in other words, emphasised a few principles which included religious faith as well as rationalism.

Piety

Piety has always been regarded by the Hindu as a quality of goodness. One must perform worship, go to temples, undertake pilgrimages and revere ascetics. He must not mix with men of low caste, must not eat forbidden food, and must not worship the gods of other sects. Householders of the higher castes must perform *puja* at home, some daily rituals, and several occasional ceremonies and domestic festivals, which recur according to the calendar. He who does not perform these rites and ceremonies is not a true Hindu.

Observance of caste

Hindu ethics did not countenance the idea of social equality. Quite early, in the Vedic age, a social system

based upon the principle of division of labour was clearly recognised. The virtue of the Brahman is the knowledge of the Vedas and his duty is to perform worship on his own behalf as well as that of others. The virtue of a Kshatriya is valour and his duty is to fight to protect his kinsmen. The virtue of a Vaisya is industry and his duty is to produce and trade in goods. The virtue of a Sudra is efficient service and his duty is to serve the three higher classes. Each man must truthfully and completely fulfill the duties cast on him by his caste. A Brahman, who has not read the Vedas and who drinks liquor, is not a Brahman. A Sudra may drink liquor but is prohibited from reading the Vedas. Similarly the student, the householder and the ascetic had their own codes of conduct. It is not legitimate for the *brahmacharin* to perform the ceremonies enjoined upon the *grihastha* and for an ascetic they are needless. The concept of *varnasramadharma*, in short, is the bedrock of Hindu ethics.

Moral living

Piety and a scrupulous observance of rituals and caste rules are not enough. The *Dharmasastras*, particularly the law book of Gautama, roundly declared, "whoever performs the sacred rites without possessing the eight virtues does not come to Brahma or to his heaven; but if a man has performed only one rite and has all the eight good qualities he comes to Brahma." The eight virtues are compassion, purity, patience, contentment, endeavour, good thoughts, freedom from greed and freedom from envy. This recalls the 'noble eightfold path' of the Buddha. Hospitality, charity, kindness, mercy, friendliness, tolerance and non-violence are among the other virtues praised by the texts. The *Tirukkural* and *Naladiyar* are among the most didactic pieces of Tamil literature. The pithy couplets of the *Tirukkural* are famous for their effective moral instruction, e.g.,

- “They are great who fast and do penance,
but they who forgive wrongs are even greater.”
- “For a kindness done without expecting a reward
heaven and earth are hardly adequate recompense.”
- “Men without compassion think only of the self;
but the men of love strip themselves to the bone for
others.”

Detachment

One important principle, emphasized by the teachers of Hindu morals, was a feeling of detachment, which one should cultivate while at work. This was not mere unselfishness but an objective idealism. “Do your duty with the thought of the Lord in your mind and not of the fruit.” This is the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*. When Arjuna loses his spirit and is averse to fighting and killing his own kinsmen in the opposite ranks, Krishna, his charioteer, first tells him that though the body may be killed the soul lives and cannot be destroyed, and secondly, that it is not right for a man to be inactive, that the inactivity of a meditating ascetic, for example, will not be quite fruitful, and that he should act, in fulfilment of the duty cast upon him by his status in society, without attachment, greed, ambition, or personal desires. This teaching undoubtedly rises far above a mere defence of the caste system as it has sometimes been narrowly interpreted. It has continued to inspire not only the Hindus but the Christians and the Muslims too.

SECTION VI

Early Christianity in India

Thomas, the Apostle

Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Islam were the non-Indian faiths which found a home in India very early. The Christians and the Muslims are the two important religious

minorities in India today. According to Christian tradition St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Christ, came to India soon after the crucifixion and converted Gondopharnes, the Parthian king, who ruled over north-west India between 20 and 41 A.D. In the course of his travels he was caught and killed somewhere in the south and his tomb lies in the church at Mylapore (Madras). It is not improbable that an enterprising Christian missionary would have travelled from Palestine to India in the first century but the legend of the martyrdom of the Apostle is doubtful. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* states that King Alfred sent, in 884 A.D., an envoy to India with rich gifts for the tomb of St. Thomas in fulfilment of a vow. The Venetian traveller Marco Polo noticed, at the close of the thirteenth century, that the tomb of St. Thomas was a popular place of pilgrimage.

Persian and Syrian Churches in Kerala

It is certain that Christian churches were established in Malabar and Ceylon in the sixth century A.D., for "Cosmos Indicopleustes", an Alexandrian monk of the period, states in his travel book, *Christian Topography*, that in these places he found churches managed by Persian priests who were under the supervision of the patriarch of Alexandria. When the Muslims conquered Persia in the seventh century and stamped out both Zoroastrianism and Christianity there the churches in India transferred their loyalty to the patriarch of Antioch (Syria). The Syrian Christians of Malabar adopted many Hindu customs and regarded themselves more as a heterodox Hindu sect, like the Buddhists or the Jains, than Christians. This decadence was arrested only in the seventeenth century by the Jesuit missionaries. One section of the Syrian church accepted the authority of Rome while the other continued to be loyal to the Syrian patriarch at Antioch.

CHAPTER 8

THE ARTS IN ANCIENT INDIA

SECTION I

Architecture

The Buddhist Stupa

Leaving out the strictly utilitarian brick structures of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa and the wooden palaces of the Mauryas, the earliest monuments of India of architectural importance are the Buddhist stupas. The stupa was originally a burial mound. Asoka and his subordinate kings raised many stupas (84,000 according to Buddhist tradition), in memory of the Buddha in several parts of India. The Buddhist stupa was usually a large hemispherical dome raised over a central chamber, in which was housed a small casket containing the relics of the Buddha (tooth, bone etc.) The brick mound was covered by an umbrella of wood or stone. This was surrounded by a wooden fence provided with gateways. Worshippers entered through the gateway and reverentially went round the mound along the circular path provided for the purpose. Sometimes two pathways were provided for circumambulation, one at the ground level and the other elevated. Construction of stupas was the craze of the period between the Mauryas and the Guptas, when the older stupas were enlarged and beautified. The three most important stupas were those at Bharhut and Sanchi in central India and that at Amaravati in the Andhra state. Of lesser importance and of later date were the stupas of Sarnath and Nalanda in eastern India and of the Nagarjunakonda valley in the Guntur district.

The Bharhut and Sanchi stupas, first built in the third century B.C., were greatly enlarged in the next and succeeding centuries. While the Bharhut stupa survives only in its

sculptures, the mound having disappeared, the Sanchi stupa has survived more or less intact. It is "one of the most striking architectural remains of ancient India." It is a hemisphere of about 120' diameter. In the second century B.C. an upper pathway was added and the wooden railings were replaced by stone. Towards the close of the first century B.C. the four stone gateways, famous for their sculpture, were added. The stupa itself became the centre of a group of lesser stupas and monastic buildings. The final form of the Amaravati stupa, larger in size than that of Sanchi, belongs to the second century A.D., i.e., the late Satavahana period. Its two pathways are adorned with carved panels, depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha.

The later domes of Sarnath and Nalanda gave up the strictly hemispherical pattern and tended to be tall structures set on a square platform. At Sarnath a high cylindrical dome was built above the hemispherical dome. The core of the stupa still remains. The vast ruins of Nalanda, where foundations alone remain, suggest a pyramidal structure. Both the stupas belong perhaps to the Gupta period.

The stupa in course of time became the nucleus of a group of buildings including smaller stupas raised over the ashes of renowned Buddhist monks, monasteries, *chaityas* or temples, preaching halls and rest houses for pilgrims.

The Cave Temples : Buddhist chaityas

Next to the stupas the most important architectural remains of ancient India are the cave temples or the rock-cut temples. Perhaps the earliest of these are the two caves of Barabar Hill near Gaya, dedicated by Asoka to Ajivika monks. They are in the form of rectangular halls with chambers at one end. They were probably used for religious meeting and worship. Similar in type are the caves of Nagarjuni Hills, near Barabar. Though the walls are

well polished they are unadorned and contain little sculpture except one Nagarjuni cave.

Of the Buddhist caves of the post-Mauryan period those of Bhaja, Karli and Ajanta in the western Deccan are the most important. The Bhaja cave, cut in the solid rock, is a deep apsidal cave. There are rows of octagonal pillars near the two walls of the hall, which support the ribs of the arched roof. The hall ends with a stupa carved in stone while the outer face is adorned with triangular carvings above the entrance. Near this hall, which served as a meeting place for the monks, was a line of five cells cut into the rock, which were the dwelling places of the monks. The famous *chaitya* hall at Karli (first century A.D.) is the largest and finest example of the Buddhist caves. The hall is just like that of Bhaja but bigger and better adorned. The hall is 124' deep with a stupa at the end. The pillars have a bulbous base and their tops carry sculptures of horses or elephants with riders, which meet the ribs of the arched roof. The rows of pillars at the sides and the lines of carved ribs of the roof above them closing down at the stupa end present a striking view. The facade has a carved verandah with pillars and arched openings above to let in light.

A particular *chaitya* cave sometimes became famous and many monks came to live near it. To house them a series of caves were cut. Thus developed the *vihara* or monastery. The group of 27 caves at Ajanta, near Haiderabad, for example, cut into a semi-circular curve of a hillside, some of which are 100' deep, range between the second century B.C. and the seventh century A.D. The sculptured facades of the Ajanta caves and their paintings have made them well known all over the world.

Hindu rock-cut temples

Hindu cave temples came to be excavated during the

seventh century. Ellora, near Ajanta, has a group of 34 cave temples, most of which are Hindu. The Pallavas built rock-cut mandapas in the hill sides at Tiruparankunram near Madurai, at Mamallapuram, Tiruchirappalli, etc. These were generally in the shape of pillared halls, cut breadthwise and not deep, with cells at the left and right ends. These contained images of worship carved on the walls. The cave temples and sculptures of Elephanta, a small island off Bombay, are the latest and belong to the eighth and ninth centuries.

The Hindus built not only rock cut cave temples but also rock cut structural temples. The Pallavas (c. 600-900) excavated both, e.g. the structures of Mahabalipuram, the earliest of which belong to the seventh century. The Rathas of Mahabalipuram and the Kailasanatha and Vairavaperumal temples of Kanchipuram were hewn out of solid rock. The best example of the rock-cut structural temple is the Kailasanatha temple at Ellora built by the Rashtrakuta king Krishna I (756—773). This was an entire temple carved out of rock “like a statue” with the sanctum, pillars, flagstaff, lesser shrines, gateway, etc. taking shape as the rock was cut away bit by bit. Unlike brick construction the work began at the top and went down to the base and hence there was neither the problem of transport nor that of scaffolding. The Ellora temple has been called “the most marvellous architectural freak in India, a wonder of the world.”

The Temples of Medieval India

The earliest structural temples of brick and lime belong to the Gupta period. But soon stone replaced brick. The temple was constructed after a set pattern. In the centre was the *sanctum sanctorum* containing the main idol. It opened into a *mandapa* or a pillared hall, where the worshippers gathered for worship. The main shrine and *mandapa* were surroun-

ded by rectangular enclosures, in which there were subsidiary shrines. Over the gateways as well as the main shrine there were towers. The shrines were built on raised platforms and the worshippers came round the main shrine along the enclosures in a *pradakshina*. Often the god and the goddess were worshipped in two separate shrines inside the temple.

Since stone—either the hard granite or the soft red sandstone—was the material used in the construction of temples, the roofing was done with the help of vertical pillars and horizontal rafters, and the arch, the dome and the vault were ignored. The plainness of this type of architecture, however, was relieved by the ornamental and delicately sculptured pillars and platforms.

The main difference between the northern or Indo-Aryan school of temple architecture and the southern or Dravidian school lies in the shape of the tower or the *sikhara*. The northern tower is conical in shape with a rounded top and curvilinear outline while the southern is in the shape of a rectangular pyramid, the tower rising in diminishing tiers.

North Indian Temples

Almost all the ancient temples of north India were destroyed by the Muslim invaders. The great temples of north India, which we see today belong to the Middle Ages. These temples are usually divided into three types or schools, viz., those of Orissa, Budelkhand and Rajasthan. The well known Orissan temples are the temple of Lingaraja at Bhubaneswar, the Sun temple at Konarak and the Vishnu Jagannath temple at Puri. They belong to the period 900—1300. The tower of the Lingaraja temple curves gracefully inward and has prominent vertical inlets. The top is adorned by an *amalaka*, i.e., a sculptured round stone, and a *kalasa*. The tower rises above the *sanctum* or main shrine

which is approached by three halls, viz., the *Bhog Mandir* or the hall of offerings which is the outermost, the *Nat Mandir* or the dance hall and the *Jagmohan* or the assembly hall next to the sanctum or *Sri Mandir*. These are separate structures joined by corridors and lie in one line in an enclosure which contains lesser shrines built on a similar pattern. Near Bhubaneswar lie the ruins of the great Sun temple of Konarak. Though built in the thirteenth century it is largely in ruins. Its plan is larger than that of the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar. Out of its various parts only the *Jagmohan* remains. The tower has fallen. The *Sri Mandir* and the *Jagmohan* are raised over an imposing platform, built to resemble the base of a chariot, round which are carved twelve decorated wheels in stone, 10' in height. The steps which led up to the *Jagmohan* and the shrine were flanked by prancing horses and the whole was supposed to be the chariot of the Sun-god. Besides the giant wheels the temple is famous for the bold sculptures of the elephant and the horse, represented as killing demons. These stand in the court of the temple as symbols of strength and beauty. The temple is also noted for its exceptionally erotic representations of the *Maithuna* sculptures or figures of lovers.

The temples of Bundelkhand were built by a branch of the Rajaputs called the Chandellas, who ruled from Bundelkhand in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The most important of the Bundelkhand school of temples are the group at Khajuraho, about a hundred miles from Jhansi. Compared to the Orissan temples these are small in size. In this group the Kandariya-Mahadeo temple is the finest. Its three parts are the shrine, the assembly hall and an entrance portico. These are not separate structures but are conceived as one. Their oneness is brought out prominently by the raised platform on which they stand. At the same time superstructures, particularly the numerous *sikharas* built over the shrine,

the hall and the portico present a picture of diversity. Even the main *sikhara* has several adjoining miniature *sikharas*. These make the entire structure resemble "an enormous anthill or a highpeak surrounded by lesser mountains."

The Rajasthan type of temples (1000-1300) are not much different from those of Bundelkhand but their special feature is the domelike roofing of the hall. The dome is not the result of building arches but of corbelling, *i.e.*, building an archlike or domelike structure by a course of overlapping pieces of stone and giving to their interior a curve-like finish. The material employed is marble which gives scope to fine carvings. The temple consisting of only two parts, *viz.*, the shrine and the hall, are even smaller than those of Khajuraho. The best examples of this type are the Jaina shrines of Mt. Abu.

South Indian Temples

The temples of South India are in a better state of preservation than those of the north and hence the different stages of their development can be clearly traced. The earliest structural temples are those of the Pallavas and are found at Kanchi and Mahabalipuram, *i.e.*, the Kailasanatha and the Shore temples, and have been referred to already. To the same period, *i.e.*, 550-800 A.D. belong the Chalukya temples of Vatapi and Aihole in South Bombay. The style of the pyramidal tower over the main shrine reached its climax in the Tanjore temple of Brihadesvara built by the Cholas, (c 900-1200). This temple, built by Rajaraja I (985-1014), has been regarded as the earliest and the best specimen of the South Indian style. The *vimana i.e.*, the tower over the sanctum which reaches a height of over 200' in thirteen diminishing tiers, dominates the entire structure. A huge monolithic bulbous dome crowns the soaring tower.

South Indian temples of the post-Chola period developed the *prakaras* or enclosures with high and mighty walls running round the main shrine. Sometimes three and sometimes five or more enclosures, the maximum being seven, were developed. Subsidiary shrines were built in these enclosures and several older temples received such additions. The kings who built the outer *prakaras* erected grand towers over their gateways, so that the original tower over the main shrine became small and insignificant. The early *prakaras* and their structures were built by the Pandyas in the thirteenth century and the later ones by the Rayas of Vijayanagar in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The latter filled the enclosures with hundred- and thousand-pillared mandapas, specially noted for their sculptures, and over the outermost gateways they erected the tallest *gopuras*. The best examples of the Pandya-Vijayanagar style are the temples of Madurai, Srirangam, Chidambaram and other places. The temple of Madurai, which was renovated by the Nayaks, in the seventeenth century, is the most beautiful temple in South India. The largest is the Vaishnavite temple at Srirangam, which has the full quota of seven enclosures, the outermost wall measuring 2,880' by 2,475'.

Outside the Tamil country the Hoysalas (in Mysore) built the well-known polygonal or star-shaped temples. The platform on which the temple stood was of the same shape. The base as well as the shrine were filled with horizontal sculptured friezes. The most beautiful specimen of the Hoysala style is the small temple of Somnathpur, which contains three towered shrines, each star-shaped from top to bottom standing on a common platform, which is also star-shaped. The shape and the brilliance of its sculptures give to this temple "a wedding-cake prettiness." The temples at Halebid and Belur are of the same style. They are bigger in size but have no towers.

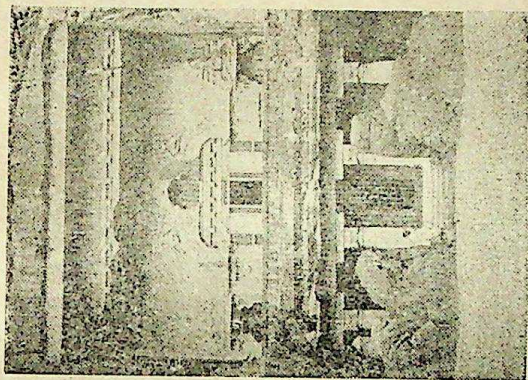
SECTION II

*Sculpture***Indus sculpture**

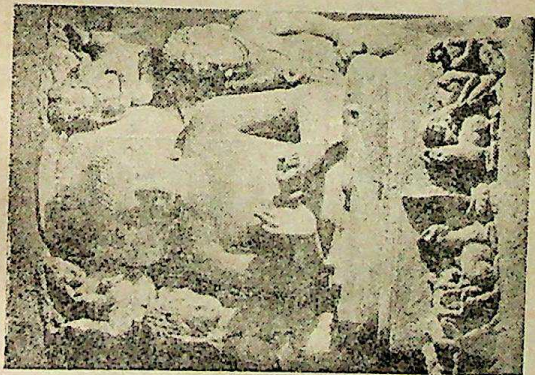
The Indus seals (copper and steatite) contain realistic sculptures of animals, *e.g.*, the great bull with its many dewlaps, the rhinoceros, the roaring tiger etc. These were the works of craftsmen, who studied their subjects with great care and began to carve with great affection. The few human figures that have survived, *e.g.*, the torso of a man with a heavy abdomen, are also noted for their realism.

Mauryan sculpture

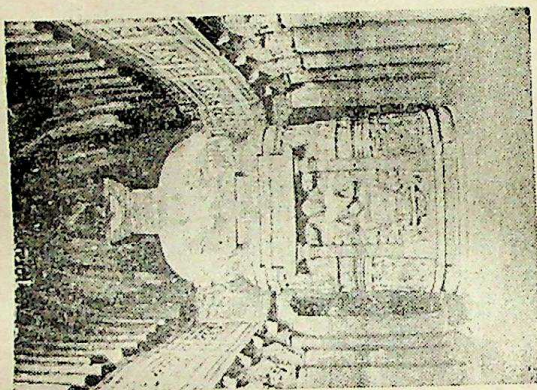
After an interval of nearly 2,000 years, which have not left any relics of art, we have the sculptures of the great pillars of Asoka (274-237 B.C.) under whose patronage the art of stone cutting and polishing reached very great heights. The stone pillars to be found at Kapilavastu, Sarnath, Rummindei (Nepal), Allahabad, etc are so finely polished that several foreign visitors had mistaken them for metallic pillars. At the top of each pillar there is the capitol containing the image of some animal like the horse or the elephant. The Sarnath pillar contains the most decorative piece. Its capitol is surrounded by four lions standing back to back on a drum showing the carved figures of a lion, an elephant, a bull and a horse with wheels between them. The wheel represents Dharma (the Wheel of Law or *Dharma-chakra*). "These sculptures", says Sir John Marshall, "are masterpieces in point of both style and technique—the finest carving, indeed, that India has yet produced and unsurpassed by anything of their kind in the ancient world."



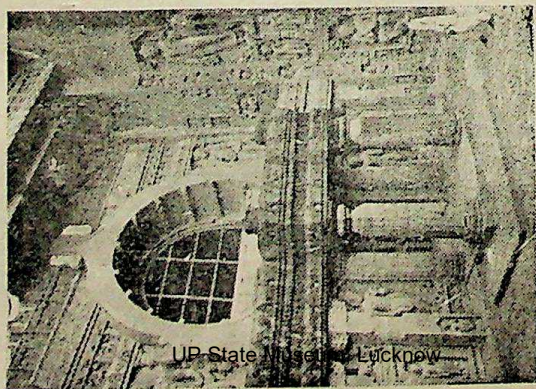
Facade. Vishwakarma cave
(No. 10), Ajanta.



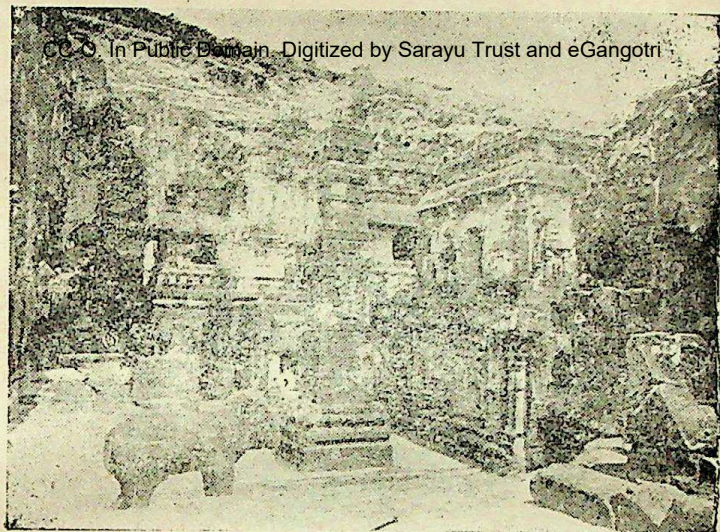
Interior, Cave No. 1. Ajanta.



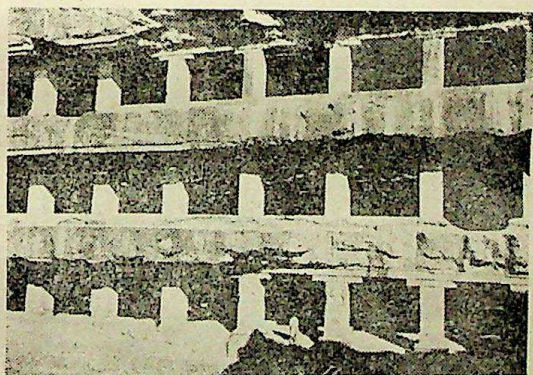
Interior view showing Budda on
Stupa, Cave No. 26 Ajanta,



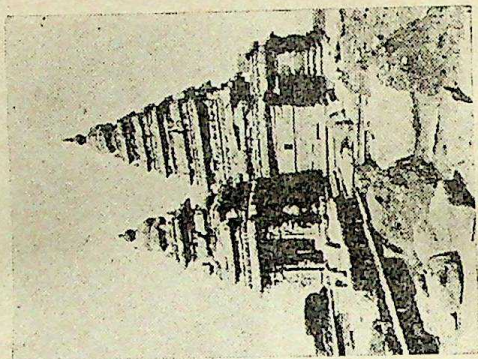
Facade, Cave 19, Ajanta.



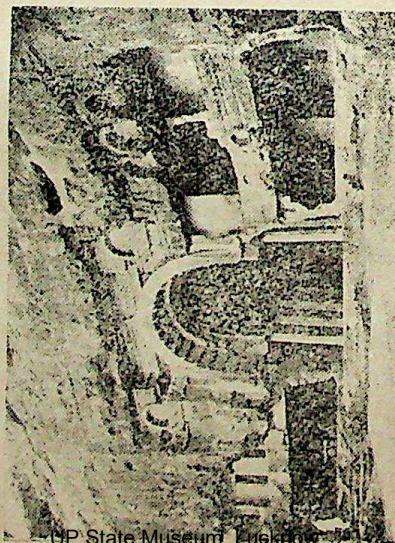
Ellora. A view of Cave XVI.



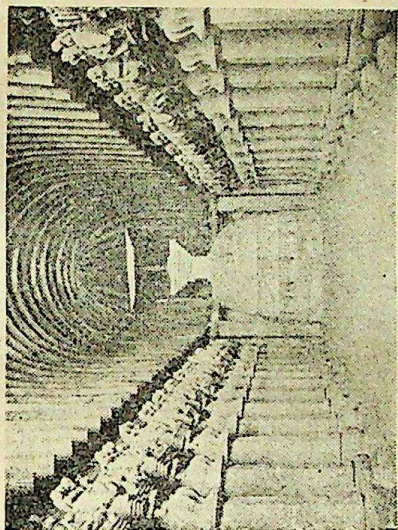
Facade, Cave No. 12, Ellora.



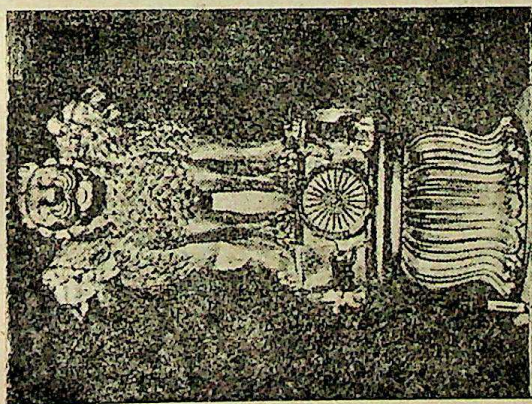
Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram.



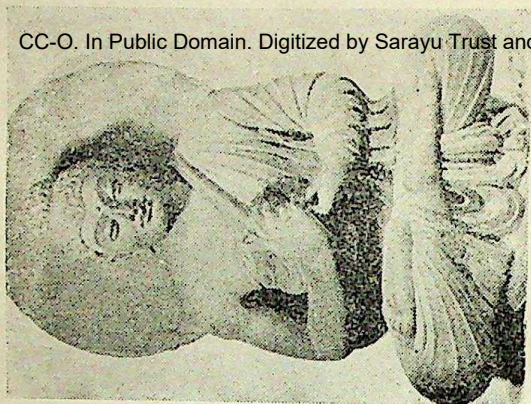
Facade of chaitya cave, Bhoja.



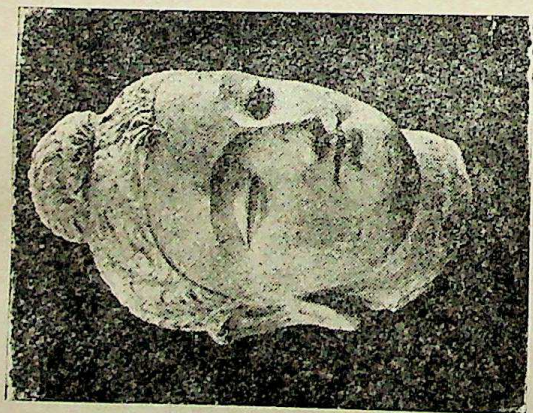
Chaitya Hall.
Karla.



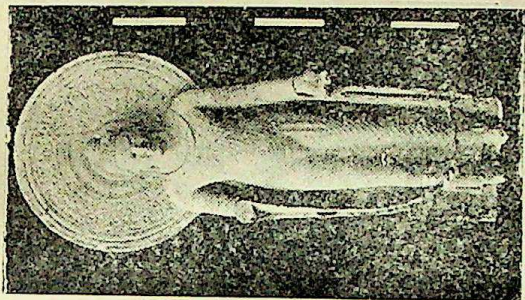
Lion Capital.
Sarnath.



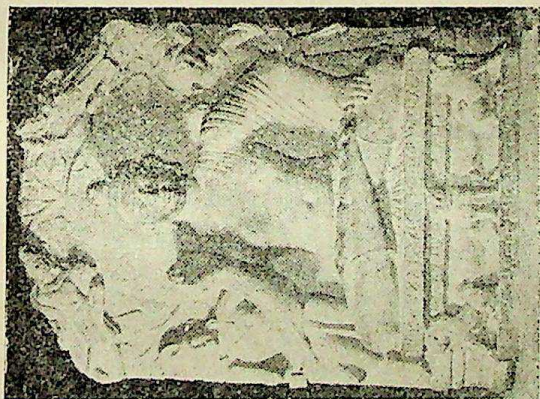
Seated Buddha.
Gandhara.



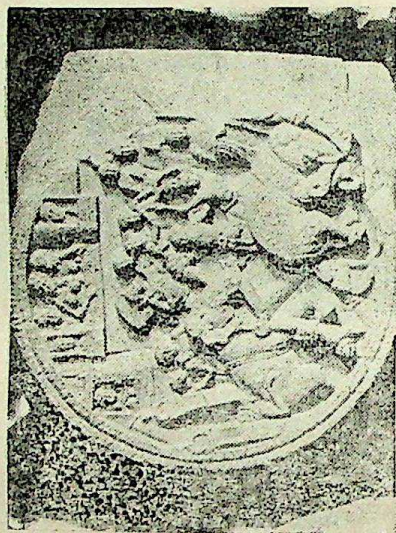
Head of Buddha.
Taxila.



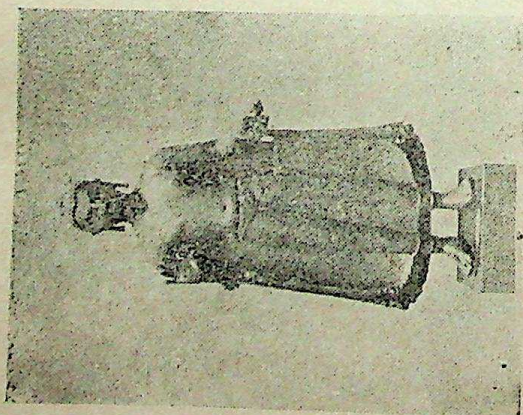
Standing Buddha.
Mathura



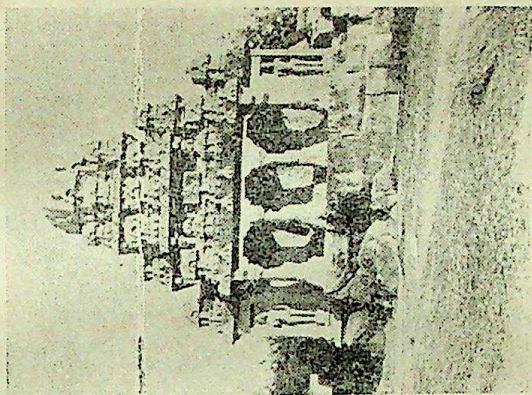
Buddha.
Mathura.



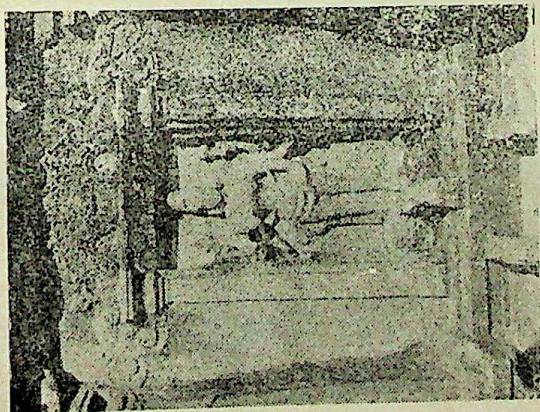
Nalagiridamana,
Amaravati.



Bronze image of the
Sultanganj Buddha.

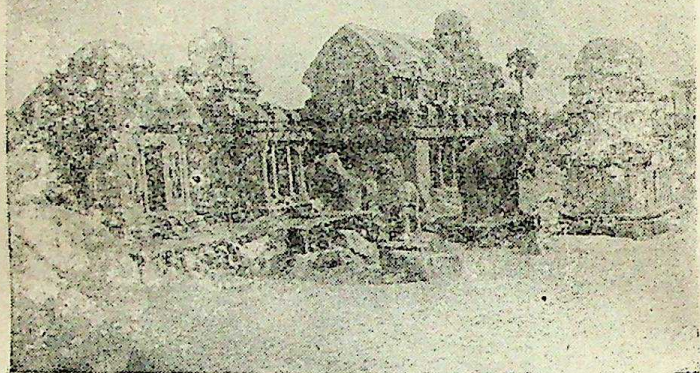


Dharmaraja Ratha,
Mahabalipuram.

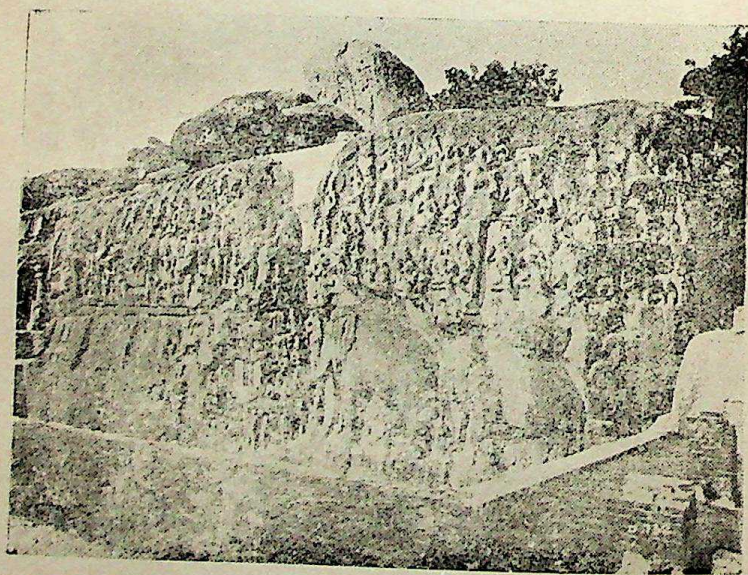


Sculpture in a niche, opposite to the
gopi's churn, Mahabalipuram.

UP State Museum, Lucknow



The Five Pandava Rathas at Mahabalipuram.



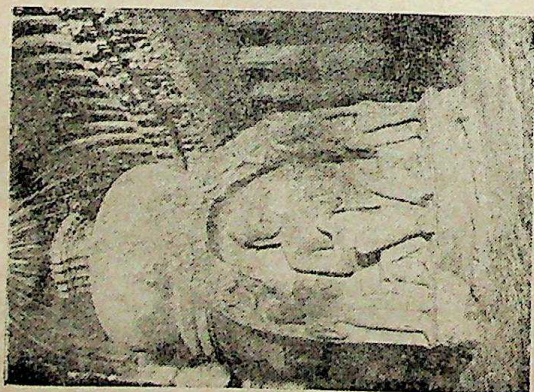
General view of Arjuna's penance, Mahabalipuram.



Bodhisattva
Ajanta



Mahesmurthi—Shiva
Cave No. 1, Elephanta.



Buddha on a Chaitya. Vishwakarma
Cave (No. 10) Ellora.

Early Buddhist sculpture

of Bharhut, Gaya and Sanchi, 150 B.C.—50 A.D.

The earliest Buddhist sculptures are the carvings on the railings and gateways at Bharhut, Gaya and Sanchi and belong to the post-Mauryan period, *i.e.*, roughly from 150 B.C. to the close of the first century B.C. The railings of Bharhut and Sanchi enclose *stupas* while that of Gaya encloses the sacred path, where the Buddha walked in meditation after obtaining enlightenment. Their sculptures depict scenes from the life of the Buddha or from the Jataka tales. Those of Bharhut are carved on one side of the vertical stone posts of the railing and look flat. They are the earliest. Those of Gaya come later. They are deeper and more rounded. This process reached its culmination in the famous carvings on the gateways of Sanchi, particularly that in the east. The uprights, the architraves (*i.e.*, the beams) and the brackets to the architraves are crowded with figures, carved without any plan. Evidently these carvings were carried out at the behests of pious private benefactors. They reveal, exactly for this reason, greater realism and represent contemporary life better than, say, a work executed in accordance with a set pattern under the supervision of one master sculptor. Though without formal unity they are endowed with "a unity transcending rule and pattern, the unity of a prosperous culture, pious in devotion to its shrines, and delighting in the world it lived in and knew." The sculptures, more lively and graceful than those of Bharhut and Gaya, include smiling *yakshis* in easy poses, men and women offering worship in shrines, siege scenes, processions of elephants and horses, lions, peacocks and mythical animals. Ornate floral designs fill the borders and interspaces. The architraves of the northern gateway are filled with panels of intricate carvings detailing scenes from the Jataka tales.

I. C.—12

Later Buddhist sculpture of

Gandhara, Mathura and Amaravati. 50—300 A.D.

When the Kushans began their rule in north-west India about 40 A.D. the Mahayana form of Buddhism had already many votaries, who were worshipping the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. There was need for their images or icons and these came to be manufactured chiefly at Gandhara in the west and Mathura in the east. Though the pride of place of having first turned out the shapely and well-known figure of the Buddha is usually given to the Graeco-Buddhist school of Gandhara it is quite probable that the Buddha images came to be manufactured at both these places more or less simultaneously to answer a common need. It must be remembered that the Kushan empire included both Gandhara and Mathura and that the Kushans actively encouraged the new. It has been suggested that the Buddhist sculptors modelled their first image of the Buddha in imitation of the crossed-legged naked figure of a Tirthankara depicted in Jaina votive tablets*. Anyway the main difference between the early sculptures of Bharhut, Gaya and Sanchi and the later ones is that in the former the Buddha is not represented in human form but shown in symbols; e.g., a pair of footprints, an empty throne, a riderless horse, a pipal tree, or the *Dharma-chakra*, while in the latter he is idolised.

The schools of Gandhara and Mathura developed independently and hence show some differences. The Gandhara school was undoubtedly influenced by the art of the Roman empire, which spread to north-west India in the wake of trade. The Gandhara Buddha images are slender, graceful, gentle, compassionate and human while those of Mathura are burly and spiritualistic, i.e., fashioned after the images of Hindu gods. They were meant to suggest the divine and

*Basham, Ibid. P. 367

not the human form. In the Gupta period the Mathura sculptors began to make Buddha images, both standing and sitting, which excelled the earlier Gandhara images in their delicate design and beauty of form and features. This was the result of a synthesis between the two schools of art.

The sculptures of the Amaravati Stupa (second century A.D.) include standing Buddha figures and numerous reliefs depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha. Of special note are the decorative circular reliefs or medallions. Each contains numerous figures, which describe an incident, *e.g.*, the Buddha taming the mad elephant or his leaving the palace and which suitably fit into a circular frame. The carvings convey an impression of vitality and rapid movement. The medallions are "certainly among the greatest works of Indian art."

Buddhist and Hindu sculptures of the Gupta period : c 300—650 A.D.

The Gupta age was the first age of religious art in India. The sculptors adopted in this age certain well understood devices like a halo round the head, half-closed eyes and a rigid posture to suggest divinity. Says Basham "If the schools of Bharhut, Sanchi and Mathura are marked by a sensual earthiness, and that of Amaravati by vital, excited movement, the Guptan sculpture suggests serenity, security and certainty." The delicately carved standing Buddha of Mathura and the serene image of the seated Buddha, his fingers forming the *dharmachakra mudra* meaning that he is preaching, are two of the most beautiful Buddha icons of India.

If Mathura and Sarnath were the noted centres of Buddhist sculpture in the Gupta period their Hindu counterparts were Gwalior and Jhansi. Here flourished schools of Hindu sculptors, who carved the first images of Hindu gods

and depicted mythological scenes on stone. One of the earliest images is that of Surya in a temple at Gwalior with a halo round his head and one hand raised in blessing. The entrance of a cave at Udayagiri, near Bhilsa (Vidisa, north of Sanchi) contains the colossal sculpture representing the *Varaha* (Boar) incarnation of Vishnu. In this sculpture the earth, which Vishnu rescued from the cosmic ocean, is represented by a tiny female figure clinging to the tusk of the boar. The sculptures of Aihole and Badami in the Deccan belonging to the fifth and sixth centuries reveal Gupta influences. The relief of Vishnu and his consorts on a ceiling slab at Aihole, which shows smooth, elongated snake-like limbs, is the best example.

The Pallava sculptures

Mahabalipuram. 7th century

Mahabalipuram, near Madras, is the treasure house of Pallava sculptures. The monolithic miniature temples here, called the Rathas, contain some of the finest sculptures of South India. Of these the best known is the relief of Durga (Mahishasuramardhani) slaying the *Mahisha* demon. There is also a relief of Mahendravarman and his two queens. The vast open pictorial relief called Arjuna's Penance (Bhagiratha's Penance, according to some) is the most celebrated piece of Pallava sculpture. It is undoubtedly a masterpiece of stone carving. The centre of the picture gallery is a small shrine containing the image of Siva worshipped by an emaciated ascetic. This is surrounded by sculptured figures of deities, nagas, men and animals of all kinds, all evidently engaged in worship or meditation. The flying figures of gods, the swaying elephants, the cat standing on its hindlegs and engaged in penance in imitation of the ascetic before the shrine, the trustful mice at its feet, the monkey family

and the pair of deer produce a picture of real forest life, said to be reminiscent of a scene described in *Kiratarjuniya*. The sculptures cover a rock measuring over 80' by 30', in the middle of which there is a natural cleft. The sculptor might well have used it to represent the Ganges and the whole scene takes the appearance of life animating on the sides of a fresh river. While these are only surface carvings, Mahabalipuram contains also a few figures of free standing animals denoting strength, notably the elephant.

The sculptures of Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta

The sculptures of these three places in the western Deccan belong to the period roughly from 500 to 900 A.D. The Vakatakas of Berar and their feudatories and ministers made notable contributions to the cave temples and paintings of Ajanta, e.g., caves XVI and XVII were excavated by a minister of Vakataka Harisena (480-515 A.D.) Though the sculptures of Ajanta are eclipsed by the wonderful paintings on the walls of its caves the former occupy an important place in the history of Indian art. The Ajanta carvings on the facades of some caves, e.g., cave XIX, are significant in the representation of the human form and the delineation of the edges. The conception of the entire face of this cave which is dominated by the well-executed arch, is striking.

The carvings of the Ellora caves are deeper than those of Mahabalipuram. The reliefs, which are "among the finest sculptures of India" depict mythological scenes, e.g., the relief of Ravana's attempt to uproot Mt. Kailas. The fright of Parvati who clings to Siva, and the calmness with which the latter presses down the mount with his foot are sketched with realism. Of similar style are the reliefs of the caves on the island of Elephanta but the most famous of Elephanta is the colossal rock-sculpture called the Trimurti. This three-headed bust of Siva, "calm with the

calmness of eternity," is perhaps the most celebrated of all ancient Indian sculptures.

Medieval Temple sculptures : 10th—17th centuries

The temples of Bhubaneswar and Konarak in Orissa are famous for their sensuous and full-blooded representation of the human form. The free standing elephant and horse of Konarak, in the act of crushing a demon, "show a strength of treatment and a feeling for animal form rare in the world's art..." The temples of Khajuraho contain numerous sculptures of gods and humans of great delicacy and grace, *e.g.*, the figures of Vishnu and several pairs of lovers. The sculptures of *maithuna* or lovers, some in a close embrace and some actually *in coita* are supposed to teach one that he should enjoy the pleasures of life to the full in order really to transcend them. While the carvings of Orissa and Khajuraho were of red sandstone, those of Rajasthan were of marble. The result was the most minute, delicate and ornate carving, *e.g.*, the ceiling of the temple of Adinatha, Mt. Abu.

The sculptures of medieval South Indian temples are chiefly to be found in the elaborate reliefs and carvings on the sides of monolithic pillars and the free standing images of gods and goddesses, their attendants etc. Under the patronage of the Rayas of Vijayanagar and their governors, *e.g.*, the Nayaks of Madurai, mandapas containing pillars studded with some of the finest sculptures of all time were erected. The group of pillars in the Minakshi temple, Madurai, which contain the carvings of *Minakshi-kalyanam*, Prahlada clinging to the Siva *linga* to escape from Yama, Ravana's attempt to uproot Mt. Kailas etc., the row of pillars in the Srirangam temple showing rearing horses and riders with the chafing lions beneath are some examples. The engravings are noted for their fine finish, the nails, flowers,

folds of cloth, teeth of animals etc. being shown in clear relief. Much the same can be said of the carvings of the temples of Vellore, Chidambaram, Ramesvaram, Halebid, Belur, and Somnathpur. The Mysore temples, particularly that of Somnathpur, are dominated by the narrow but finely carved friezes of human and animal figures and the bough canopied standing and sitting figures of gods and goddesses on the outer walls, engraved with the finish of jewellery.

Metal sculpture

The iron pillar of Chandra (Gupta I ?) at Delhi and the Sultanganj copper Buddha (now in the Birmingham Museum) testify to the skill of metal smiths in the Gupta age. The latter image, 7½' high dressed in a transparent cloak, is noted for its symmetry, grace, poise and liveliness. The last attribute is the result of an appearance of movement introduced into its poise. The Palas of Bengal (8th to the 11th centuries) were Buddhists and under their patronage bronze images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas were mass-produced and exported to the Indonesian islands, Nepal and Tibet.

“It was in South India especially in the kingdom of the Cholas, that the greatest works of art in metal were made, by a school of bronze-casters which has not been excelled in the world.” Like the icons in stone those of metal were idealistic and suggestive of the divine and no attempt was made to make them conform to realism. Though the South Indian bronzes were cast strictly in accordance with the canons laid down by the iconographical text books the craftsmen, mostly from Tamil Nad, produced images of great beauty and variety. The beauty was the product of grace and simplicity. The ornaments and attire were simple and few revealing large portions of bare smooth flesh. The best known and the most popular Tamil bronze cast is that of the

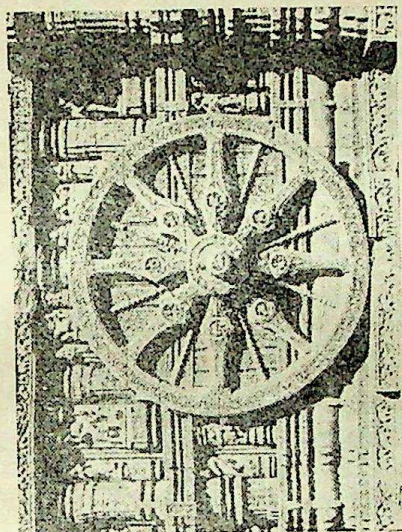
Dancing Siva or Nataraja. The earliest Nataraja bronzes belong to the eleventh century. The image is one of "a graceful young man, his four arms delicately posed, often with a flame in the open palm of one hand and a halo of flames encircling him, one foot firm on the back of a demon, and the other raised in a posture well known in the Indian dance. Thus the god appears as the very essence of vital, ordered movement, eternal youth, and ethereal light. This is not the European conception of the highest godhead, but, once the religious background is understood, even the European can recognize in the finest specimens of the dancing Siva a true religious inspiration, a wholly successful effort at depicting in plastic terms divine truth, beauty and joy." (Basham).

Besides images of gods and goddesses the bronze casters made images of saints, and kings and queens, who made rich benefactions to temples. The Tirumalai temple contains three fine, dignified, life-size bronzes of Krishnadeva Raya and his two queens.

The bronze images were not made by chiselling and carving metal as in the case of stone. They were obtained by casting molten metal into moulds of clay. First the figure was designed in wax and then covered with fine clay. The whole was then heated and the wax melted away leaving the mould.

Terracottas

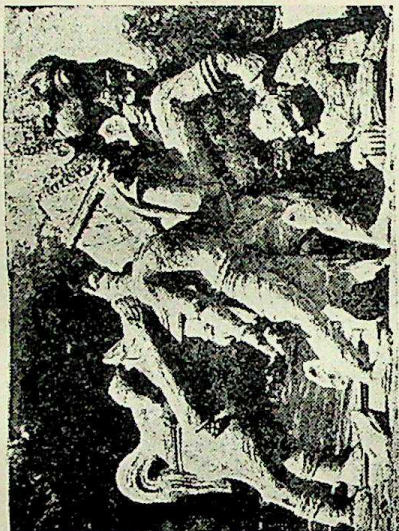
From the earliest times, from Harrappa downwards, poor people made images and plaques of baked clay. Almost every archaeological site in India has thrown out hoards of terracottas, *viz.*, figures of mother-goddesses, plaques, charms, votive offerings, figures of mother and child or man and woman etc. Though many of them are crude, some show good workmanship and beautiful features, *e.g.*, the heads of



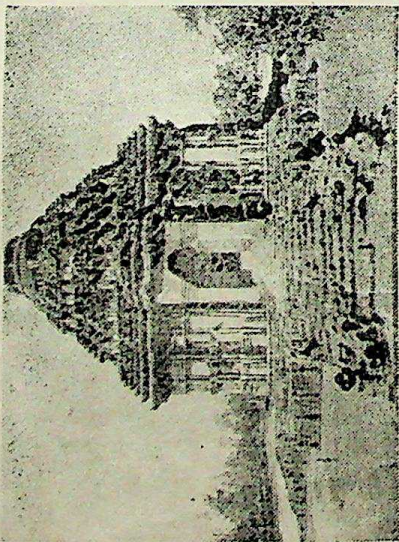
Wheel, Sun temple,
Konarak.



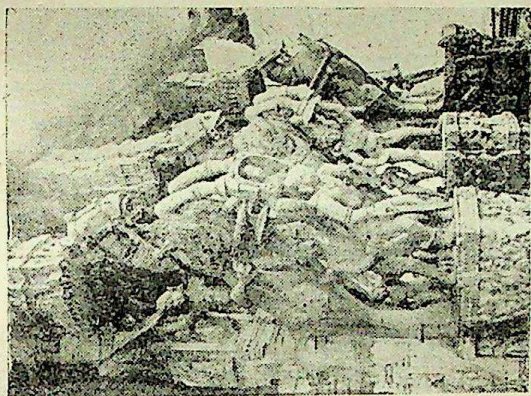
Elephant,
Konarak.



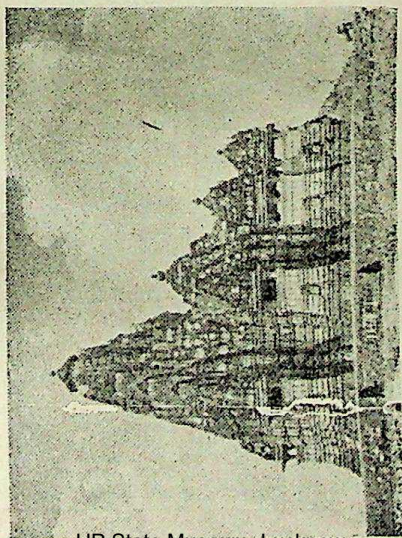
Horse,
Konarak.



Sun Temple,
Konarak.

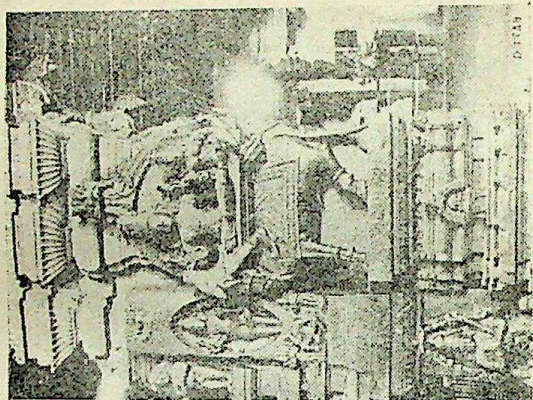


Pillars with horse-brackets,
Seshagiri—rayar Mandapam.
Ranganatha temple, Srirangam.

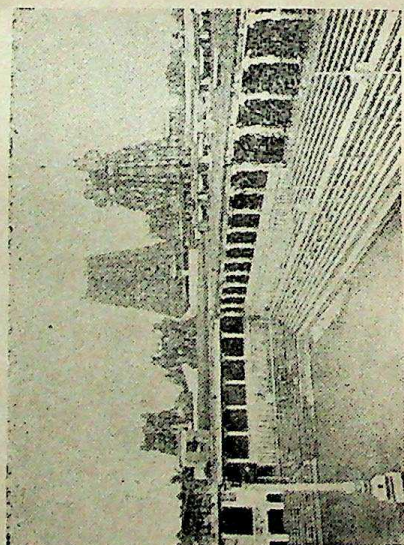


Kandarya Mahadev Temple.
Khajuraho.

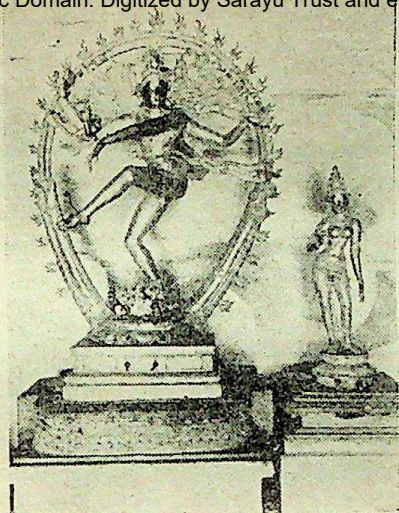
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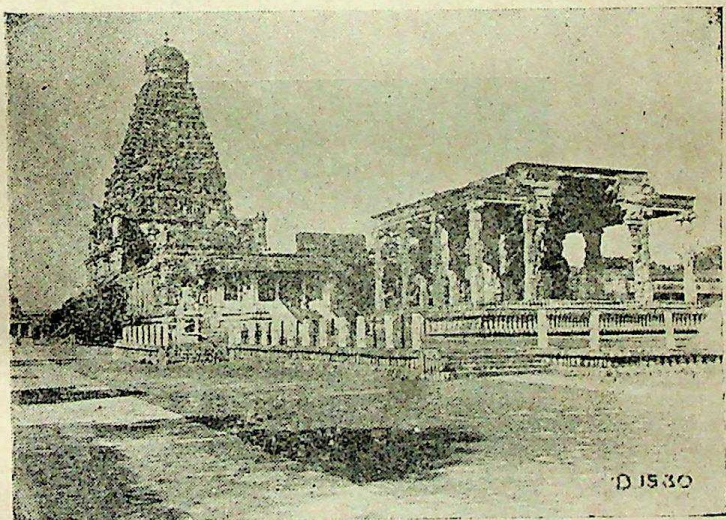
Siva and Parvathi, Nandi mandapa,
Minakshi temple, Madurai.



The Golden Lily tank and gopurams,
Minakshi temple, Madurai.

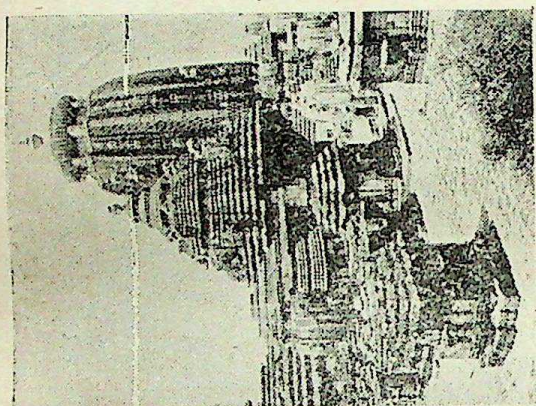


Bronze images of Nataraja and Sivakami in Sabha mandapa,
Brihadeswara temple, Tanjore.

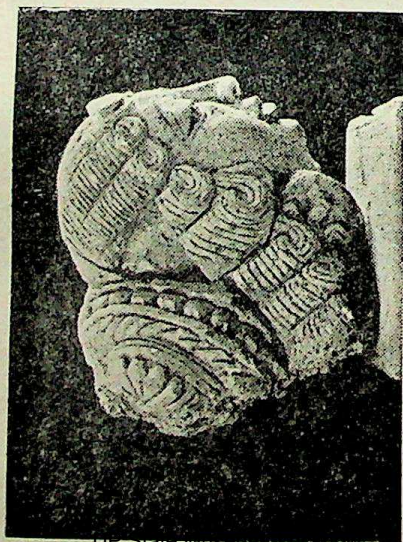


Brihadeswara Temple, Tanjore.

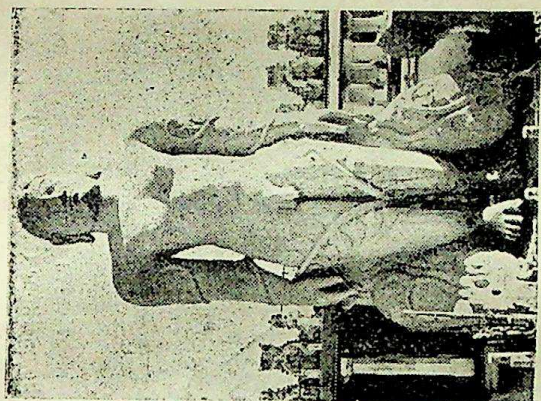
UP State Museum, Lucknow



Lingaraj Mandir,
Bhubaneswar.



Parvati (terracotta),
Ahichchatra.



Gomatesswara on the top of
Doddabetta, (front view)
Sravanbelgola.

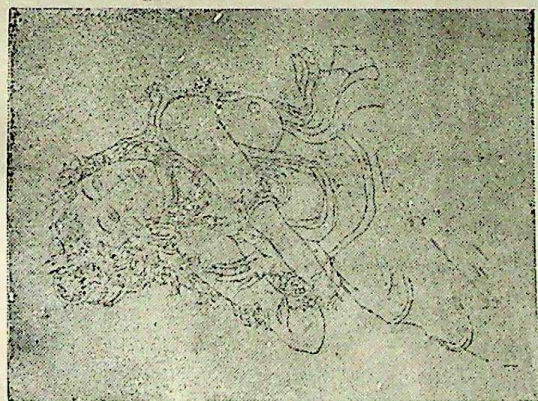
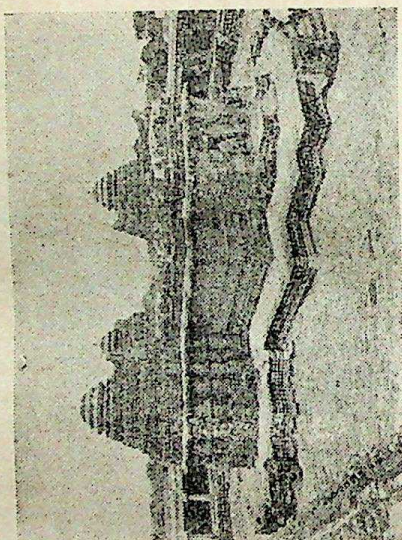


Figure of Dancing Girl
on pillar of verandah,
Sittannavasal temple.



Kesava temple,
Somnathpur (Mysore State)



Frieze,
Somnathpur.

Siva and Parvatī found at Ahicchatra (Gupta period), which reveal attractive hair-styles.

SECTION III

Painting

From classical literature we learn that the palaces of kings and nobles were adorned with beautiful wall paintings. Though there were professional artists the members of the aristocratic and educated classes of both sexes had a knowledge of painting, which was considered as a mark of distinction. Paintings were made both on walls and boards. Unlike sculptures, stone or metal, the paintings are subject to decay due to atmospheric reasons. The remains of ancient Indian painting are chiefly to be found on the walls of the caves at Ajanta, Bagh and Sittannavasal.

Ajanta, Bagh and Sittannavasal

The paintings on the walls of the Ajanta caves range over the period 100 B.C. to 600 A.D. the bulk belonging to the Gupta age. Though the themes are mainly Buddhist and deal with incidents in the life of the Buddha and the Jataka tales the works were executed not by monks but by skilled secular craftsmen. No developments in style are discernible. Generally speaking the earlier pictures are characterised by sharp outlines while the later ones pay greater attention to shape and design. Perspective was sought to be gained by placing the figures in the background above those in the foreground. The important or dominating figure in a theme was usually drawn much larger than the subsidiary ones. The large central figure also served to differentiate between one scene and another as border lines were not employed. One scene just shaded off into another. The paintings were done on the rock surface prepared with a coating of clay or cowdung finished with white gypsum.

Battered by centuries of atmospheric and climatic changes the surface layers have fallen off or the colours faded away at several places showing dark or white patches. But whatever has remained reveals perfect drawing and the use of bright pigments, which, here and there, appear even now remarkably fresh.

Among the many paintings of Ajanta those of Avalokiteswara—Padmapani, who looks down at the erring world with great compassion, the temptation of the Buddha, *i.e.*, the scene in which the Master sits in meditation unaffected by the temptations of lascivious women and the threats of demons, etc., fighting bulls and elephants, Persian prince and princess and a few others are well-known. The pictures are realistic and portray contemporary life, for here are to be seen not only the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, ascetics, princes and princesses but coolies with their loads, beggars and peasants together with varieties of birds, animals and flowers.

More than a hundred miles north of Ajanta and about fifty miles east of Baroda lies the cave of Bagh, whose walls contain a few paintings of the seventh century. These depict a procession of elephants, “perhaps more impressive in composition than anything Ajanta has to offer,” and a scene of a dancer and musicians, all women. These are in a better state of preservation than the pictures of Ajanta. Traces of Ajanta style paintings are also found at Badami, Ellora and Sittannavasal. The roof of a Jaina cave at the last mentioned place contains fine murals of a pond of lotuses, dancing *apsaras*, etc., belonging to the seventh century A. D. But the work is much decayed. The best preserved Ajanta style pictures are to be found on the walls of Mt. Sigiriya in central Ceylon. On this mount a Sinhalese king of the fifth century built a palace and a fort and filled the bare walls of the rock with *apsarases* and demi-

gods. Most of the paintings have vanished under the sun and rain except a set of about twenty *apsarases*, preserved by a overhanging ledge of rock. The lower halves of these divine women are immersed in layers of cloud. With exquisite features and charming poses and in dazzling colours the *apsarases* are found in the attitude of looking down at the earth and blessing it or dropping flowers upon it.

Medieval Hindu painting

In the age of the building of the great Hindu temples, *i.e.*, from the Chola period downwards, Hindu artists painted mythological scenes on the walls of temples and gave bright colours to the statuary of the *gopuras* in much the same way as at present. We have survivals of medieval Hindu painting at Tanjore, Vijayanagar and other places. As the works were made in the much frequented and busy temples they have grossly suffered or totally disappeared under repeated white washings or repairs. Here and there new paintings have covered the older ones. Repairs like resurfacing have sometimes led to the discovery of hitherto unknown paintings. Generally speaking the paintings of the medieval Hindu temples are more realistic than the Hindu sculptures of an earlier period. They place greater reliance on sharp outlines than on modelling or designing, which is the chief feature of the paintings of the Gupta age. Thus there was some technical decline in the Middle Ages.

SECTION IV

Music and Dance

Bharata Natya Sastra

The hymns of the Sama Veda were meant to be sung, *i.e.*, intoned according to set tunes. The rules of intonation were to be strictly followed and the result was a monotonous musical chant. The fine arts of drama, dance and music

made steady progress from the Vedic times. From the *Arthasastra* we learn that dramatic and dance performances were usual and Kautilya warned that similar shows must not be allowed to take too much time of the country people. The *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana and the *Natyasastra* of Bharata, belonging to the post-Mauryan period (150 B. C. to 300 A. D.), reflect similar conditions. The *Natya Sastra*, the first important treatise on early Hindu music was written by some one in the beginning of the Christian era and attributed in accordance with the prevailing custom, to the Vedic sage Bharata. The *Bharata Natya Sastra* is the earliest authority not only on Hindu music but on dance and drama as well and the three arts were regarded as closely allied with one another.

Music

Ancient Hindu music was aware of the scale of seven notes or the heptatonic scale, viz., *sa(dja)*, *ri(shaba)*, *ga(ndhara)*, *ma(dhyama)*, *pa(nchama)*, *da(ivata)* and *ni(shada)*. These notes could be repeated, varied, shortened or lengthened to suit a particular *raga* or tune or melody of which there were six basic types, viz., *Bhairava* suitable for being rendered at dawn and indicating fear, *Kausika* and *Hindola* to be rendered at night and indicative of joy and love, *Dipaka* and *Sriraga*, to be rendered in the afternoon and associated with laughter or mirth, and *Megha*, suitable for the morning and associated with peace and calm. About thirty *ragas* are mentioned in the *Bharata Natyasastra*, but later many more were added. The rhythm or timing which governs the rendering of a particular *raga* is called *tala*, of which 22 types are enumerated in the book of Bharata.

Musical instruments

As early as the Vedic age the lute (stringed instrument), the flute and the drum were the musical instruments known

and used. Originally the lute was a bow harp with ten strings. By the Gupta period it was replaced by a pear-shaped lute, whose strings were played either by the fingers or by means of a plectrum. In the eighth century appeared the prototype of the modern *vina* with a long finger board and a round body to magnify the sound. Numerous types of flutes, reed instruments and drums were used besides cymbals, gongs and bells to provide an orchestral background.

Dance

Dance (*nritya*) developed side by side with music and drama or acting (*natya*, *nataka*). *Abhinaya* or gesture to make known the emotion was the most important feature of *nritya*. There were eight types of *abhinaya* to illustrate eight emotions, viz., love, courage, hatred, anger, mirth, terror, pity and surprise. These emotions are expressed by the gestures of the hands or *mudras* and of eyes, movements of the neck, arms and legs, in fact of the whole body. The *Bharata Natya Sastra* mentions 37 *mudras*, 36 gestures of the eye, 13 poses of the head and 10 postures of the body. Of course their numbers have grown. With their help any emotion could be expressed and the spoken word was not employed. The *mudras* were employed not only to convey emotion but to portray gods, animals, birds, natural phenomena like wind or storm, etc.

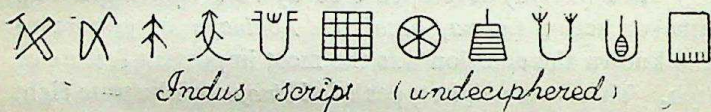
CHAPTER 9

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ANCIENT INDIA

SECTION I

*Languages and writing in ancient India***Sanskrit and the Prakrits**

The pre-Aryan inhabitants of India spoke some language which, we may presume, had no script. The Indus people seem to have had a pictorial script, which has not as yet been



ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ <i>De-vaa-nam-pi-ye</i>	ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ <i>pi-ya-da-si la-ja</i>
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ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ <i>he-vam-aa-ha</i>	ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ <i>sa-du-vi-sa-ti-va-saa</i>
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ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ <i>hi-si-te-na me</i>	ॐ ॐ <i>i-yam</i>
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Brahmi script

deciphered. It is a moot point whether the Aryans had a script when they composed the Vedas and the Upanishads, which, incidentally, do not make any reference to writing or writing materials. There are two views in this matter. One is that they were handed down from generation to generation by rote and the other is that such a mass of literature as the Vedas, etc., could not have been rigidly sustained in memory

and that some writing must have been known to the Vedic Aryans. Anyhow the earliest writing that has survived is that of the edicts of Asoka (274-237 B.C.) which are in a script called *Brahmi*. The language employed was the dialect, which was spoken in Magadha, *i.e.*, the *Magadhi*. It is quite possible that the *Brahmi* script was in existence for several centuries before Asoka and that it was gradually derived from the Indus script.

The *Brahmi* script was not uniform throughout India. Local variations developed even in the days of Asoka. In the course of centuries they gave rise to the numerous alphabets known in India today. Letters varied and with them the ornamental ticks and flourishes. By the time of the Muhammadan conquest, *i.e.*, by the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Indian scripts had more or less reached their present form. In north India the upper ticks of letters were so drawn as to form a continuous line and thus developed the script called *Nagari*. Even this script displayed local variations. The North Indian languages, *viz.*, Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujerati etc. came to be written in this script. In South India different scripts developed. In the extreme south an angular script, without the ticks but with flourishes, developed and that was the parent of modern Tamil. The process of development of each script can be studied from inscriptions belonging to different periods.

'Prakrit' is the name given to the naturally grown dialect spoken by the masses of Aryan tribesmen. It was popular and unorthodox, and was not bound by the rules of grammar and syntax. Local and regional variations developed in course of time so that several Prakrit dialects were spoken, *e.g.*, *Magadhi* in Magadha (the language of the Asokan edicts), *Pali* in western India, *Sauraseni* in one part of modern Uttar Pradesh, *Maharashtri* *Pisachi* in the Deccan, *Sinhalese*

in Ceylon, etc. These had made great departures from the language of the Vedas. The need was felt for fixing the rules of grammar and phonetics and it was amply fulfilled by the great grammar of Panini, called the *Ashtadyayi* ('Eight Chapters'), which is generally assigned to the fourth century B.C. This terse work laid down more than 4,000 grammatical rules. This work and its famous commentary, the *Mahabhashya* (the 'Great Commentary') of Patanjali became the accepted grammatical texts of the language, which came to be called *Sanskrit*, i.e., perfected or refined, as opposed to the *Prakrits*, the popular dialects that had grown naturally. The Sanskrit that was standardized by Panini and Patanjali is generally called classical Sanskrit. It was spoken mostly by the learned Brahmins in the pre-Guptan period (i.e., before 300 A.D.) The ruling dynasties of this period used Prakrit, e.g., the edicts of Asoka. In the Guptan period it became the language of the court. The earliest important inscription in classical Sanskrit is that of the Saka Satrap Rudradaman at Girnar dated 150 A.D. Thanks to the rigidity of Panini's grammar the language did not develop local variations. It served as the *lingua franca* of India and was intelligible to pandits coming together from different parts of the country.

Pali, Sinhalese, Tamil

Pali was one of the important early Prakrits spoken in western India, i.e., in the region of Sanchi and Ujjain. It was adopted by the Sthaviravadin Buddhists and it grew to be the language of the Buddhist canon. It is still the religious language of the Buddhists of Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia. In the wake of the Asokan Buddhist mission to Ceylon many Aryans migrated to the island carrying with them their Prakrit dialect. Influenced by the local dialect it grew rapidly and became the language of the island, viz., Sinhalese.

The language that was spoken in the extreme south, i.e., south of Madras, was Tamil. The oldest Tamil literature,

i.e., of the Sangam age (roughly 100 B.C. to 500 A.D.) show very little influence of the Aryan dialects, but after the Sangam age Tamil absorbed a number of loan words from Sanskrit. Malayalam, a close ally of Tamil, became a separate language with its own script in the eleventh century. Kannada and Telugu, which have a very large admixture of Sanskrit came to have their own literature, for the first time, in the ninth and twelfth centuries respectively.

Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam are sometimes grouped together and called the Dravidian languages, meaning thereby that they were not spoken by the Aryans but by the natives, *i.e.*, the Dravidians. The term, Dravida, however, is a Prakrit or Sanskrit form of Tamil, and it must be noted that there is not much common ground between these languages and that a knowledge of one of these does not help an understanding of the other.

SECTION II

Literature

A. Sanskrit

The literature of the Vedas and the Upanishads

The main purpose of the Vedas and allied literature is religious and philosophical and hence much of them is dry ; but a few verses here and there show good style and merit. The Rig Veda is a collection of 1028 hymns, composed by different men over a long period, say, about five centuries. They have been collected together in ten *mandalas* or chapters. The language employed was so archaic and the allusions so obscure that the meanings were hard to understand and several commentaries and explanations had to be composed later. One of the hymns addressed to Indra give a graphic description of his fight with the cloud-dragon, Vritra, for the release of water (rain). A hymn addressed

to Ushas, the goddess of Dawn, and another to Aryanyani, the Forest-spirit, show a deep feeling for nature. The hymn called the *Gamester's Lament*, addressed to the sun-god Savitur, is secular in outlook. It gives a touching description of a man who has lost his all by gambling.

The Yajur Veda and the Brahmanas, the earliest prose works, have no great claims to literary quality. The Brahmanas, however, contain, here and there, some racy tales, e.g., the story of Pururavas and Urvashi in the Satapatha Brahmana. The Upanishads, which state the bold speculations of the sages of ancient India, are of considerable literary merit. Their language is no longer archaic and their arguments are convincing and forceful.

The literature of the Epics

The events described in the two great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*, are cast, according to tradition, in the *Treta* and *Dwapara yugas*, immediately preceding the present aeon. The legend of the *Ramayana* was committed to verse perhaps in the first or second century B.C. The last book, the *Uttarakanda*, appears to be a later addition. The traditional author of the work is said to be Valmiki, a contemporary of the hero. It contains 24,000 beautiful Sanskrit verses and has served as a model for the epic style in all Indian languages. The well-known story of Rama, particularly his perigrinations in the Deccan and his expedition against Ceylon, clearly point out to the gradual Aryan expansion in the south. This is proved by the innumerable antiquities connected with the *Ramayana* legend that lie spread over the sub-continent and Ceylon.

The *Mahabharatha* is a voluminous work of about 100,000 verses. It does not deal with a single story like the *Ramayana*. Though purporting to tell the story of the feud between the cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas,

it contains within itself the stories of Rama, Nala and Damayanti, Sakuntala, Savitri etc. Of a different character are the chapters, the *Santi Parvam* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. The former is a dissertation on statecraft and ethics recited by Bhishma as he lay dying on a bed of arrows in the field of Kurukshetra. The latter, the sermon of Krishna to Arjuna, has been already referred to. The traditional author of the epic was the sage Vyasa, who taught it to his pupil, Vaisampayana, who in his turn, recited it in public on the occasion of a great sacrifice performed by king Janamejaya.

The two epics have served through the ages as an important bond of unity among the Hindus. Their heroes and heroines have stood as models of proper conduct in everyday life. For the common man these along with the *Puranas* and the *Dharmasastras* are the books of religion and morals.

Classical Sanskrit Literature

Sanskrit Poetry

The Gupta age (c 300-600 A.D.) was the golden age of the Hindus. Samudra Gupta (330-380 A.D.) established a powerful kingdom in the Gangetic valley and led a *digvijaya* in the south, along the east coast right upto Kanchi. His successor, Chandra Gupta II, surnamed Vikramaditya, (380-415 A.D.), conquered western India, i.e., Malwa and Gujerat from the foreign Saka satraps. Ujjain, in Malwa, became the secondary capital of the Guptas and a flourishing centre of commerce. The military glory and commercial prosperity of the age and peace at home were reflected in an extraordinary literary output of a high order. It was also the golden age of Hinduism. Buddhism, which had gained in importance from the patronage of Asoka Maurya, now lost its ascendancy. The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, Fa-Hein, who visited India in the reign of Chandra Gupta II

recorded that the middle country (*i.e.*, the Gangetic valley) was the land of the Brahmans. It had been the cradle of Buddhism. The Gupta kings were Vaishnavas and performed sacrifices according to the Vedic rites. Hindu sacrifices, Vedic studies, Sanskrit and Hindu practices as a whole asserted themselves over the Buddhist practices and pursuits. The *puranas* and the *Dharmasastras* were systematically edited and reached their final form in this age. The *dasavatara* legends, which came into vogue in this period, and the *puranas* were devoted to a glorification of the Hindu trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Sanskrit superseded Pali and other Prakrit languages in importance. It became the official language of the Gupta empire, and as referred to earlier, was spoken by the king, his courtiers, the priests and the learned. It was the language of all secular and religious literature of the age and medium of instruction in all centres of education.

Kavyas or long poems

The earliest Sanskrit drama in verse and prose was the *Vasavadatta-Natyadhara*, written by Subandhu, who is said to have been a Brahman minister of Mauryan kings Chandragupta and Bindusara (322-274 B.C.) The work is not now extant. From Kautilya's warning that dance and dramatic performances must not be allowed to take too much time of the country people it may be inferred that these were usual and quite popular in his age. The earliest surviving Sanskrit poetry in the classical style is that of Asvaghosha, a contemporary of king Kanishka (78-120 A.D.), and who composed the *Buddhacharita*, a life of the Buddha in simple verse. In the Gupta age purely secular themes like love, romance and adventure came to be freely handled and a highly ornate and artificial language, the so-called court-language, became the fashion. The leading light of the age and

the greatest Sanskrit poet was Kalidasa, who adorned the court of Ujjain, most probably in the reigns of Chandra Gupta II and his successor. He must have undergone a rigorous course of training in linguistics and poetics and possessed a gentle and sympathetic nature. This is evident from his works though no reliable account of his life has survived. His works further show that he was deeply imbued with the Indian courtly culture at its zenith.

Kalidasa is one of the world's greatest poets. His great *kavyas* or long poems are the *Kumarasambhava* or the 'Birth of Kumara', and the *Raghuvamsa* or the 'Dynasty of Raghuv', and his lyrics or shorter poems are the *Meghaduta* or the 'Cloud Messenger' and the *Ritusamhara* or the 'Garland of the Seasons.' The *Kumarasambhava* describes the courtship and marriage of Siva and Parvati, the birth of their son Kumara or Skanda, his battle with the demon Taraka and his triumph. The *Raghuvamsa* gives the Ramayana story in brief. The *Meghaduta* is a beautiful poem of over 100 verses, in which a *Yaksha* who has been banished for a year from his divine city in the Himalayas, asks a passing cloud to convey his message of love and approaching reunion to his wife, who must have grown weak from sorrow and separation. The cloud is asked to pass over the river Narmada and the forests on its bank and then reach the Himalayas after visiting Ujjain. The poem gives a beautiful description of the landscape, rivers and cities over which the cloud has to pass. The *Yaksha* desires the cloud to find out his house and tell his wife of his constant love.

"I see your body in the sinuous creeper,
Your gaze in the startled eyes of deer,
Your cheek in the moon, your hair in the
plumage of peacocks.

And in the tiny ripples of the river I see your sidelong glances, but alas, my dearest, nowhere do I find your whole likeness ! ”

The *Meghaduta* is one of the most popular Sanskrit poems and its theme has inspired many later poets. The *Ritusamhara* describes the six seasons of the Hindu year (Vasanta, Ghreeshma, Varsha, Hemanta, Sisira, and Sharad ritus) in relation to the sentiment of love or *sringara*.

In the period immediately following Kalidasa, i.e., roughly between 450 A.D. and 650 A.D. were composed the following *kavyas*. The *Kiratarjuniya* of Bharavi, which describes the conflict between Arjuna and Kirata, i.e., Siva disguised as a hunter, and which is famous for its florid description of natural scenery, is one. Kumaradasa's *Janaki-harana* or 'Abduction of Sita,' which follows the tradition of Kalidasa, is another. Magha's *Sisupala-vadha* deals with Krishna's slaying of Sisupala. The *Bhattikavya* of Bhatti is a remarkable poem dealing with the story of Rama. Its passages are meant to illustrate the rules of grammar.

After the Gupta period the trend towards ornateness, artificiality and verbal display gathered momentum. Correspondingly the importance of the story or plot diminished. Magha's *Sisupala-vadha* is the earliest example of this trend. The poem has no unity and the story is not well handled. On the other hand it introduces verses of amazing verbal ingenuity e.g., there are the *ekakshara* and *dvyakshara* verses, i.e., stanzas employing only one consonant or two consonants. A verse of the *gatapratyagatam* ('gone and come back') type is a syllabic palindrome, i.e., the verse remains the same if the syllables of the whole verse are read upside down. Another called *sarvatobhadra* ('valid all ways') is both a palindrome and an acrostic. It is a verse in which each line is a syllabic palindrome. In addition the first four syllables of the first line can be

read down in the first syllables of the four lines ; the first four syllables of the second line can be read down in the second syllables of the four lines, and so on.

Sakara—nanara—kasa
Kayasada—da—sayaka
Rasa—hava vaha—sara
Nadavada—da—vadana.

Such ingenious verses came to be looked upon as an essential part of *kavyas*. This process reached its climax with the introduction of pun not in a word or verse but running right through the poem. Two long poems of the twelfth century belong to this class. The *Ramacharita* of Sandhyakara was both the story of Rama and the biography of the poet's patron, Ramapala of Bengal. The *Raghava-Pandaviya* of Kaviraja Madhavabhatta dealt simultaneously with the stories of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* by means of verses, each of which gave two meanings.

Slokas : Single stanza poems

Side by side with the *kavyas*, collections of *slokas* or verses, each complete in itself, were composed in the early medieval period and they contain "the best things in medieval poetry." Bhartruhari is the best known poet of this class. His work, which recalls the *Tirukkural* in Tamil, consists of three centums, devoted to wisdom, love and renunciation respectively. Each stanza is simple and to the point, e.g.

“ You may boldly take a gem from the jaws of a
crocodile,
You may swim the ocean with its tossing wreath of
waves.

You may wear an angry serpent like a flower in your
hair,

But you will never satisfy a fool who is set in his
opinions."

"Your hair well combed, your eyes reaching to your
ears,

Your mouth filled with rows of teeth white by
nature,

Your breasts charmingly adorned with a necklace of
pearls,

Slim girl, your body, though at rest, disturbs me."

Devotional poetry

Besides the *mantras* culled from the Vedic and Upanishadic sources which were uttered in prayer, poems meant to be sung in devotion were in vogue in the early Middle Ages. Of the shorter poems Sankara's *Bhaja Govindam*, and of the longer poems Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*, are the best known. The former belongs to the ninth century and the latter to the twelfth century. The latter is an opera and its beautiful songs deal with the love of Krishna for Radha. The songs from both are still popular. Jayadeva's lyrics, unlike the earlier Sanskrit poetry, are set to rhyme.

Narrative poetry

Somadeva's *Kathasarit-sagara* or 'Ocean of Stories' belongs to the eleventh century. These popular stories were translations in Sanskrit of a part of the Prakrit *Brihat-katha* of Gunadhya, who is said to have lived in the first or second century B.C. Some important historical and biographical poems were composed at different dates in the medieval period. The earliest of these is the *Harsha-charita* of Bana. The author was the court poet of Harsha (606-647 A.D.) The work in ornate and florid poetic-prose deals with the early life of Harsha and was apparently left in an unfinished state. The *Vikramankadevacharita* of Bilhana deals with the life and

adventures of Vikramaditya VI (1076-1127), the greatest of the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. The *Hammira-Mahakavya* of Nayachandra Suri, a Jain monk, deals with the life of Hamvira or Hammira, the Rajaput king (of the Chahamana dynasty) of Ranasthambapura or Ranthambhor, who bravely fought with Alauddin Khilji but was defeated and killed in battle in 1301.

Features of classical Sanskrit poetry

As referred to already, classical Sanskrit poetry grew ornate, artificial and verbose under the demands of the court. The chief patron was the king and the poem was meant for recitation or performance in his presence or in that of small groups of pandits. The composition was strictly in accordance with rigid conventions and theories and rules of versification as described in the well-known works on poetics like the *Kavyadarsa* of Dandin and the *Kavyalankara* of Bhamaha, both belonging to the seventh century, the *Dhvanyaloka* of Anandavardhana (ninth century) and the *Kavyaprakasa* of Mammata (twelfth century). The theme was to be secular, optimistic and to end with a happy note. Grief, violence and terror were not to predominate. Tragedy, in short, was unknown to the classical Sanskrit poetry and drama. Stories with tragic endings were converted into comedies by means of divine intercession. The *Hammira-Mahakavya*, of the fourteenth century, e.g., in which the hero and his followers are killed in battle, ends with a description of their entry into heaven. The religious and social conditions of the age were taken for granted and the poems do not reveal any ideas of spiritual inquiry, social criticism or self-introspection.

Classical Sanskrit poetry dealt with the emotions and actions of man. Nature, religion and the gods were treated in relation to him and not independently. There were no

poems, e.g., describing nature for its own sake. Many Vedic hymns were addressed to deified natural phenomena. But Kalidasa's *Ritusamhara* deals with the seasons in relation to love. Yet it is a fact that throughout classical literature the poet's love of nature is very well drawn out and Kalidasa's works, e.g., are the best in this respect. The private lives of kings, princes, courtiers and courtesans, panegyrics in praise of a king and his ancestors, ethics and morals, and humour were the subjects dealt with in poetry and drama. The basic emotions or *rasas* recognised are nine (*navarajas*), viz., *Sringara* or love, *hasya* or mirth, *karuna* or compassion, *bhibhatsa* or terror, *raudra* or anger (which includes *kshudra* or hatred), *bhayanaka* or fear, *adbhuta* or surprise and *santa* or calmness. The first eight represent disturbed states of mind, everyone of which is supposed to end in the last. A poet is expected to employ one or more of these *rasas* in his poem.

Other important elements of Sanskrit poetry were *dhvani* and *alamkara*. *Dhvani* means suggestion of a secondary meaning besides the primary or obvious meaning by the choice of words and phrases of a particular sound (*dhvani*). The sound-device helped the poet to convey to the mind of the reader much more than the bare meanings of the words employed by him. *Alamkara* refers to the employment of figures of speech like simile, metaphor, punning, alliteration etc. These were freely made use of as well as the frequent use of synonyms and stock-epithets like the *ratnakara* or the 'mine of jewels' for the sea, *achala* or 'unmoving' for the mountain, and so on.

Sanskrit drama

The earliest Sanskrit poets, Subandu (third century B.C.) and Asvaghosha (first century A.D.) were also the earliest dramatists. The former's *Vasavadatta-Natyadhara* has

already been referred to. Fragments of Asvaghosha's plays have survived in some Buddhist manuscripts of Central Asia. The oldest plays that have survived in full are those of Bhasa, e.g., *Svapnavasavadatta* (the Vision of Vasavadatta) and *Pratijna Yaugandharayana* (Yaugandharayana's Vows). He also wrote a number of short dramas based on epic stories.

Kalidasa, the greatest poet, was also the greatest dramatist. His three plays are the *Abhijnana Sakuntala* or 'the Recognition of Sakuntala', *Malavikagnimitra* and *Vikramorvasi*. The second deals with the love of Malavika, the princess of Vidharba, and Agnimitra, the Sunga prince of Magadha. It is a story of harem-intrigue. The last play, i.e., "Urvashi won by valour" deals with the love of Urvashi, the divine nymph, and king Pururavas. The first is the best of Kalidasa, the best known drama in Sanskrit and reckoned as one of the world's best books. It deals with the poignant theme of King Dushyanta who loves and marries Sakuntala, the foster-daughter of the forest-hermit Kanva, by the *gandharva* rite and then forgets her as a result of the curse of sage Durvasa. Sakuntala, now in the family way, is sent to the king's court with suitable attendants, but to her great horror is rejected by him as a complete stranger. The ring given to her by him, when he plighted troth, is lost on the way and this completes her discomfiture. She collapses and is carried away by Menaka, the divine nymph and her mother, to her abode in heaven. The king recognises Sakuntala, when he sees the ring given to her by him and which was recovered by two fishermen from a fish and brought to him. He is struck with remorse. Thus the play is evidently a tragedy. But it does not stop there. Years after the separation Dushyanta goes to heaven at the request of Indra to help the gods in their battle against the demons. As he is returning victorious he meets, on the

slopes of heaven, outside a hermitage, a small boy wrestling with a tame lion cub, his playmate, and is told that he is Bharata, son of Sakuntala. The lovers are reunited and everything ends happily. Not only is the plot of the drama of absorbing interest but the characters, every one of them, are perfectly delineated and the dialogues are fresh and vigorous and brimming with happy idioms.

The *Mricchakatika* or "The Little Clay Cart," the only play of Sudraka, probably a contemporary of Kalidasa, is noted for its realism and complicated plot. It tells the story of the love of a poor Brahman, Charudatta, for a virtuous and noble-minded courtesan, Vasantasena. This is interwoven with a political intrigue, which ends with the overthrow of an evil king. The play contains a trial scene, vividly told, in which the hero is saved from execution at the last moment. Without introducing any supernatural element the drama paints a true picture of the city and court life of the day.

Vishakadatta, assigned to the sixth or seventh century A.D. is the author of two historical dramas, one of which is the *Mudra-Rakshasa*, dealing with the Mauryan revolution, i.e., the overthrow of the Nandas by Chandra Gupta Maurya with the help of the wily Brahman minister Chanakya. Like that of the *Mrichhakatika* the plot of this play is complicated and deals with the schemes of Chanakya to bring Rakshasa, the loyal minister of the Nanda, into discredit. This too contains a trial scene in which the hero is saved at the last moment. The other play, *Devichandragupta* has survived only in fragments. It deals with the conquest of Malwa by Chandra Gupta II Vikramaditya from its Saka ruler. The latter is said to have defeated and imprisoned Vikramaditya's elder brother, Rama Gupta, and released him on condition that he should send him his wife Dhruvadevi, famed for her beauty. Chandra Gupta could not bear

the insult. He went to the court of the Saka king in the guise of Dhruvadevi and killed him. Then he slew his nerveless brother and married his widow. This colourful story lacks confirmation. Most probably it is a myth woven round the Gupta's conquest of Malwa and his marriage with his brother's widow.

Harsha is credited with the authorship of three plays, *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarsika* and *Nagananda*. The first two are romantic comedies, while the third expounds the sentiment of self-sacrifice. Its theme is that a serpent king offers himself as prey to Garuda in order to save his brood.

Of unusual interest is the satirical one-act play, *Mattavilasa-Prahasana* ('The Sport of the Drunkards—A Farce'), in which a group of drunken and dissolute ascetics of both sexes and different creeds, (Buddhist, Jaina, Saiva, etc) quarrel over the loss of a *kapala* or skull, used as a begging bowl, belonging to a saivite ascetic of the *Kapalika* group, and which is ultimately found in the possession of a dog. The author Mahendravarman was the Pallava king of Kanchi between 600 and 630 A.D. The play throws much light on the social life of the day.

Bhavabhuti belongs to the eighth century. He was patronised by Yasovarman of Kanauj (c 730-740 A. D.). His well-known dramas are *Malati-Madhava*, *Maha-Viracharitra* and *Uttara-Ramacharitra*. The first is a romantic play while the latter two deal with episodes from the *Ramayana*. The plays, particularly the first, are dominated by the elements of pathos and horror, which were strange to the literature of an earlier day.

After Bhavabhuti the quality of the Sanskrit drama began to decline. The dramas of Murari, Rajasekhara and Krishnamisra (9th—11th centuries) were of pure literary value and were meant for reading and not acting.

Theatre and theatrical performances

From a few early literary references it is gleaned that in the Vedic period religious legends were being enacted during religious festivals in dance and imitative gestures. Nothing was spoken or sung. This was how, it is said, Greek drama started later. Some writers think that the earliest Indian stage was an adaptation of the theatre of the early Graeco-Bactrian kings and point out to the fact that the curtain, to the Sanskrit dramatists, was known as *Yavanika*.

Usually during festivals, temple courts or palace courts were adapted as theatres and sometimes shows were arranged in private houses before invited audiences. There is no reason to believe that regular public performances were made in public theatres. A screen or curtain (*Yavanika*) separated the main stage (*ranga*) from the back stage and through it the actors made their entrance and faced the audience. There was no screen which separated the stage from the auditorium. There was no scenery. The dress of each character was fixed by convention. Each actor spoke his dialogue, which was both in prose and verse. The verses were not sung. In the prologue, which preceded the drama, the chief actor, who was also the stage-manager or *sutradhara*, held a discussion with his wife on the nature of the play, which was a sort of introduction. Further, every act was preceded by a prelude (*pravesaka*), in which an actor described not what was to come but what had gone before. The *Nayaka* or the hero, the *Nayika* or the heroine, the *Pratinayaka* or the villain and the *Vidushaka* or the comedian were almost inevitable characters of a major drama. The *Vita* or a man of shallow culture and hanger-on of the hero, a parasite, was also known. Troups of professional actors of both sexes, and amateurs are known.

There were long and short dramas, from ten-act plays to one-act plays. As referred to above, every drama was a comedy. Of course there were cruel separations, unjust accusations, innocent persons being led to death, persecution, villainy and so on but ultimately right triumphed and the end was happy. This was the sort of thing the ancient dramatists liked to portray and the audience liked to see. Legends of gods and heroes came in handy for the purpose. In the case of plays dealing with men only the insistence on a happy ending sometimes led to an unnatural twisting of the plot.

Sanskrit prose

The Yajur Veda, the Atharva Veda and the post-Vedic compositions like the Upanishads and the Brahmanas contain examples of the earliest Sanskrit prose. In the classical age an ornate prose, written with all the effort of versification and classified as *kavya*, developed. Dandin and Bana, who lived in the sixth and seventh centuries, wrote in this style, but the former's is simpler. His *Dasakumaracharitra* or 'The Tales of the Ten Princes' is a collection of numerous exciting stories woven into a common parent narrative. The stories are realistic and portray particularly low life as no other work of the age does. They deal with the adventures of the princes and their contacts with peasants, hill folk, merchants, thieves, prostitutes and so on. Bana's two works are the *Harshacharita* and the *Kadambari*. In the former the author gives a rare autobiographical sketch. Losing his parents at an early age he led a life of wandering and, though a Brahman by birth, freely mixed with boys of low caste. He cultivated the friendship of ascetics, men of letters, actors, musicians, etc. As he grew up he became sufficiently known to be called by Harsha to attend court. In his work on his patron he gives his early life, and the

work was probably unfinished. He was an opponent of the theory of divine right and the Machiavellian system of Kautilya. The other work is a romance, the complicated plot of which is revealed through a series of narrated episodes. The two works, more particularly the latter, abound in long sentences, alliterations, puns, and other figures of speech. The narrative is noted for its flowing descriptions and ornate literary composition.

Animal Tales : the Panchatantra

An important part of ancient Indian folklore is the fable in which the chief characters are animals. Animal tales are first found in the Pali Jataka stories but the best known collection is the *Panchatantra*. These tales must have been current since a long time and were grouped together and edited in the Gupta age. These stories are supposed to have been composed by a sage in order to educate the stupid sons of a king, who could not be taught in the routine way. The book exists in several versions, the most famous of which is the *Hitopadesa*, of one Narayana of Bengal (twelfth century). Written in a simple style the book was intended as a school reader. "Never was a school text book better written." Each story taught worldly wisdom, caution and self-interest and not ethics or morals. The stories are often boxed into one another.

"He who believes a well-spoken knave will be fooled by rogues like the Brahman who was robbed of his goat," said the sage.

"How?" asked the prince. "Seeing a Brahman fetching a goat on his shoulder three rogues decided to get it from him for nothing. They posted themselves under different trees. The first rogue exclaimed in surprise as the Brahman approached, 'Oh, Brahman, you are carrying a dog on your shoulder.'" "It is not

a dog; it is a goat for sacrifice," retorted the Brahman and walked away.

The second rogue repeated what the first said. The Brahman now put the goat on the ground, examined it closely and putting it on his shoulder began to walk with a wavering mind."

"At this point the sage said that even a good man would waver at the words of rogues if he trusts them, like the camel which trusted the company of the lion, the tiger, the jackal and the crow and came to grief. "How did that happen?" asked the prince. "A stray camel joined the above group and its master, the lion, assured him safety and protection. Once there was continuous rain and the party had no food for several days. The lion fell ill and grew thin but he would not approve the scheme of his servants that the camel could be killed for food. 'Suppose the camel himself agrees to be sacrificed?', said the crow. The lion kept quiet. Encouraged by this the crow brought all including the camel to the presence of the lion and first offered himself for food. 'I would rather die than to do such a thing,' said the lion. The tiger then offered himself for food and then the jackal. 'Never, never,' shouted the lion. When the camel, following their example, offered himself the lion tore him up and all the four ate his flesh."

"Hence he who believes the words of rogues would suffer like the camel. In the meanwhile the wavering Brahman came to the third tree and the third rogue propped up and said what his colleagues had said earlier. The Brahman now thought that he must be wrong. Abandoning the goat he took a bath in the nearest river to cleanse himself from the contact of a dog and went home. The three rogues took the goat and ate it."

The influence of the *Panchatantra* on European fable was tremendous. In the eighteenth century it was translated into Arabic. In this period the Arab Empire included parts of Europe and the Arabic versions were translated into Hebrew, Greek and Latin and then into other European languages. The first English version was edited in 1570 by Sir Thomas North with the title, 'The Morall Philosophie of Doni,' Doni being the author of the Latin version which was used by North. The fables of La Fontaine of France and the tales of Reynard the Fox well known throughout Europe and finally edited by Goethe, were inspired by the tales of "Pilpay" i.e., Vidyapati, the sage who is said to have narrated the stories of the *Panchatantra* and the *Brihat-katha*. Of course successive translations and adaptations made the tales far different from the originals, especially in nomenclature.

Scientific literature

The study of sciences like mathematics, astronomy and medicine received great development during the Gupta period. The famous mathematician and astronomer of the time was Aryabhatta and his work is known as the *Aryabhat-tiya*. He knew the π and the decimal system and used the zero in arithmetical calculations. A less scientific astronomer was Varahamihira whose *Brihat-Samhita* was not only a work on astronomy but included such varied subjects as astrology, architecture, physiology, geography, weather, animals, omens, women, marriages etc. It was an encyclopaedia of Hindu sciences and society. Vagbhatta was a writer on medicine. His work called the *Ashtanga Sangraha* ('Summary in Eight Chapters') is a summary of the earlier medical works of Charaka and Susruta.

B. Prakrit Literature

The earliest Prakrit literature was Jain. It had no pretensions to the ornate style of the classical Sanskrit literature. But it was quite homely. The Jaina text, the *Sutratkrtanga*, gives the following warning to celibate monks, who might be carrying on with women in secret. If a monk falls and is forced to marry.

“ — — it’s all housework and errands !

‘ Fetch a knife to cut this gourd, !

Get me some fresh fruit ! ’

‘ We want wood to boil the greens,
 and for a fire in the evening ! ’

‘ Now paint my feet ! ’

‘ Come and massage my back !

‘ Get me my lip-salve !

‘ Find my sun-shade and slippers ! ’

‘ I want a knife to cut this string ! ’

‘ Take my robe and have it dyed blue ! ’

‘ Fetch the pot and the drum and the rag-ball,
 for our little boy to play with ! ’

Monk, the rains are on the way,
 Patch the roof of the house and look to the
 stores !

‘ Bring me the chair with the twine seat,
 and my wooden-soled slippers to go out
 walking ! ’

So pregnant women boss their husbands,
 just as though they were household slaves.

When a child is born, the reward of their labours,
 She makes the father hold the baby.

And sometimes the fathers of sons
 stagger under their burdens like camels.

to lull the howling child to sleep,

And, though they are shamefaced about it, scrub dirty garments, just like washerman...

So, monks, resist the wiles of women,

monks, resist the wiles of women,
Avoid their friendship and company..."*

The Satavahanas (c 200 B.C.—200 A.D.) of the Deccan and the east coast patronised Prakrit poets. Gunadhya, who lived in the court of the Satavahana kings in the second or first century B.C. wrote the *Brihatkatha* or the 'Great Story Book' in Paisachi Prakrit. The work was lost except a tiny part, which was translated into Sanskrit by Somadeva in the eleventh century, the *Kathasarit sagara*. Hala, a Satavahana king (c. first century B.C.) is said to be the author of the *Sattasai* or *Saptasati*, an erotic poem in Maharashtri Prakrit in 700 verses. Each verse is independent and tells a whole story concisely, e.g.,

“ Last night with scorn the lady gave the
wanderer

straw for his bed.

This morning she gathers it together,
weeping."

Later Prakrit works cultivated a style, which came close to that of the classical works in Sanskrit. Vakpati Raja was a Prakrit poet of the eighth century, who along with Bhavabhuti, adorned the court of Yasovarman of Kanauj. His poem *Gandavaho* describes his patron's invasion and conquest of Bengal. Rajasekhara was a poet who wrote both in Sanskrit and Prakrit and who adorned the court of the Rajput king of Kanauj (Gurjara Pratihara, Mahendrapala I,

* Basham : Ibid. PP 459-60.

890-908 A.D.). His work in Prakrit was a drama called after its heroine, *Karpuramanjari*.

C. Buddhist Pali Literature

Buddhist canonical literature has already been discussed. Pali was a Prakrit language adopted by the Buddhists for their literature and was characterised by simplicity and a telling narrative style. But it was beset with a monotonous repetition of stock phrases and descriptions. The following is an example of the narrative style of the *Jataka Tales*. It is an abridgment of the 'Buddha's Great Going Forth.'

"Then lovely women, decked like the damsels of the gods with every kind of ornament and well trained in dance and song, began to perform. But the Bodhisattva had no taste for dancing, and for a while sleep overcame him. The women thought: 'He for whose sake we danced and sang has fallen asleep—why should we trouble ourselves further.' And they put up their instruments and lay down. The lamps of scented oil burned on.

The Bodhisattva awoke and sat cross-legged on his couch. He saw the women with their instruments laid aside, fast asleep. Saliva trickled from the mouths of some; some were covered in sweat; some ground their teeth in sleep; some snored; the garments of some were in disarray, so that they repulsively showed their private parts. When he saw them thus in their dishevelment he was more than ever disgusted with the life of passion. The great hall, decked like the heavenly palace of Indra, seemed to him like a charnel ground full of scattered corpses. Life seemed as fleeting as a house on fire. 'How wretched it all is! How afflicted it all is!' he cried, and his mind was set even more strongly on asceticism. 'Today, I must leave on the *mahabhimishkramana*' ('the

Great Going Forth') he thought, and he rose from his bed and went to the door.

There lay Channa, his head on the threshold. 'Today, I must go forth...get ready my horse. Then he thought 'I will see my son,' and he went to the apartment of the Mother of Rahula, and opened the bedroom door. A little lamp of scented oil burned in the inner room. The Mother of Rahula was sleeping on a bed thickly strewn with flowers, with her son's head on her arm. The Bodhisattva set foot on the threshold and stood gazing at them. 'If I move her hand and take up my son I shall waken the queen,' he thought 'and then I shall not be able to go. When I am a Buddha I will come back and see my son.' And he left the palace.'

The Ceylonese chronicles, the *Mahayamsa* and the *Dipavamsa* give some details of the early wars between the Tamil kingdoms and Buddhist rulers of Ceylon in addition to a history of Buddhism. The poems of the *Theragatha* (Songs of the Monks) and the *Therigatha* (Songs of the Nuns) are noted for their simplicity and popular appeal. In one of the poems of the latter group Ambapali, a beautiful courtesan of Vaisali, who became a Buddhist nun, contrasts her beauty of youth with her withered features in old age, her sweet voice of youth with her stammering speech of old age, and so on, in a series of lines.

D. Tamil Literature

Features of ancient Tamil literature

The following are the unique features of ancient Tamil literature compared with that of Vedic or classical Sanskrit. Firstly, it consisted mostly of innumerable short verses, some free and blank and some with initial rhyming. Secondly, they were neither religious like the Vedic hymns nor secular like the courtly classical Sanskrit literature. They were not sung

by court poets but by wandering bards, who visited one king after another and showing their poetic skill obtained rewards. Most of them were humble folk belonging to the professions and some were learned Brahmans, who acted as advisers to some king or another. The verses dealt with matters and events seen and experienced by the poets, and were characterised by a rare directness and poignancy. The subject matter was roughly divided into *Aham* (love and home) and *Puram* (war and government). The two words mean 'internal' and 'external.' Another division was into the five *tinai*s or five kinds of poems suitable to the five regions, viz., (i) *kurinji* or the hilly region, (ii) *mullai* or forest region, (iii) *marudam* or the plain, (iv) *neidal* or the coast, and (v) *palai* or the desert region. It was recognised that life, both of the *Aham* and the *Puram* variety, in one region was different from that in another. In other words, each region was connected with some special aspect of love or war. Thus the poems of the hilly region dealt with secret or pre-nuptial love and cattle raiding; those of the forest region with parting of the lovers and predatory excursions; those of the plains with love in married life, i.e., married men carrying on with courtesans, and siege of forts; those of the coast with the parting of the fishermen's wives from their husbands and battles; and those of the desert region with prolonged separation of the lovers and laying waste the countryside by the victorious army. Each region had its own flowers and animals too.

Thirdly, narrative poetry or epic poetry (*kavya*) and drama were not known to ancient Tamil literature. Until we come to the *Silappadikaram* and the *Manimekalai*, which belong to the late Sangam period, the poems or groups of poems deal with aspects of love, life or morals but do not contain a common thread of narrative or story. Fourthly, the Tamil poets used to meet occasionally in the Academy or *Sangam* at Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas, and dis-

cuss the worth of each new composition and approve or reject it on its merits. There was nothing like it in classical Sanskrit or Prakrit literature.

The tradition of the Sangam : its age

The tradition of the *Sangam* has an important place in the history of ancient Tamil literature. According to this tradition the rules of notation and grammar of Sanskrit and Tamil were noted down respectively by Panini and Agastya from sounds emanating from the two sides of Siva's drum. Agastya came south with his grammar. There were three *Sangams*. The first was of hoary antiquity and was attended by gods like Siva and Muruga. Agastya presided. Its works have all perished. Of the works of the second or 'middle' *Sangam* only the *Tolkappiyam* has survived. The poets of the third or 'late' *Sangam* wrote the 'Ettuttogai' or the Eight Anthologies. This tradition cannot be strictly defended. What can be stated with certainty is that on the basis of the confirmation of many of the economic and social details contained in early Tamil literature from the account of the Graeco-Roman travellers of the first and second centuries A.D. it may be inferred that both belong to the same age and that ancient Tamil poets tried to obtain for their works the approval of the literary academy at Madurai. A work which was not approved by the *Sangam* had no chance of survival. The age of the *Sangam* is generally held to be the first few centuries of the Christian era. It may be from 200 B.C. to 500 A.D. It is not possible to be more definite in this matter.

The Sangam works

Besides the 'Eight Anthologies' there were the 'Ten Idylls' or *Pattuppattu*, which seem to be somewhat later than the former group. These together were clasid fied as

the *Padinen Melkanakku* or 'the Eighteen Works of the Higher Order.' These were also the *Padinen Kilkanakku* or 'the Eighteen Works of Lower Order.' The 'Ten Idylls' were almost forgotten and their manuscripts were brought to light only in the first half of this century by Tamil scholars. The entire lot of 36 works is sometimes spoken of as the Sangam works. Their relative age can be ascertained only by a detailed study of their language, style, content, admixture of Sanskrit or Prakrit words etc.

The following are the *Ettuttogai* or 'Eight Anthologies' (1) *Narrinai*, (2) *Kurunthogai*, (3) *Aingurunuru*, (4) *Padirruppattu*, (5) *Paripadal*, (6) *Kalithogai*, (7) *Ahananuru*, and (8) *Purananuru*. Some of these names contain the number of verses in the poems concerned. Of these all except (4), (5) and (8) deal with love themes. Each one of these is a collection of poems by different authors. The *Purananuru* or '400 poems on Public Life' illustrate the society of the ancient Tamils. The *Pattuppattu* or the 'Ten Idylls' are the following: (1) *Tiru Murugan Arruppadaï*, (2) *Porunar Arruppadaï*, (3) *Sirupan Arruppadaï*, (4) *Perumpan Arruppadaï*, (5) *Maduraikanchi*, (6) *Nedunalyadaï*, (7) *Kurinchippattu*, (8) *Pattinappalai*, (9) *Mullaippattu*, and (10) *Malaipadukadam*. These ten poems deal with a single theme each, and each is the work of one author. Item (1) guides the devotees to the beneficence of god Muruga; (2) guides the warriors to their benefactor; (3) and (4) guide the musicians to the lord, who would properly appreciate their skill and reward them; (5) gives a description of life in the rich city of Madurai and warns the devotee not to place faith in the transient things of this world; (6) to (9) deal with romantic themes (separation and union of the hero and heroine); and (10) guides the folk-dancer (*kuttan*) to his benefactor. These are the works collectively known as the *Padinen Melkanakku*.

The works of the *Padinen Kilkanakku* are the following : (1) *Naladiyar*, (2) *Nanmanikkadigai*, (3) *Innavai Narpadu*, (4) *Inna Narpadu*, (5) *Kar Narpadu*, (6) *Kalavali Narpadu*, (7) *Tirukkural*, (8) *Tirikadugam*, (9) *Acharakkovai*, (10) *Aindinai Aimbadu*, (11) *Aindinai Elubadu*, (12) *Tinaimalai Aimbadu*, (13) *Tinaimalai Nurraimbadu*, (14) *Sirupanchamulam*, (15) *Palamoli Nanuru*, (16) *Kainnilai*, (17) *Mudumolik-kanchi* and (18) *Eladi*. Most of the names also give the number of verses contained in the works. Of these (5), (6) and (10) to (13) deal with love, i.e., *Aham*. The others are ethical and didactic pieces, the *Tirukkural* being the most famous of them all.

Some famous poets of the Sangam Age were Nakkirar, Kapilar, Paranaar, Avvaiyar, and Tiruvalluvar. Kapilar and Paranaar were Brahmans. Most poets were poor and belonged to the lay professions like weaver, bangle-maker, etc. The author of the *Naladiyar* was a Jain.

The following are some extracts from the anthologies and other works mentioned above :

A poetess (Avvaiyar) sings of her patron thus,

“Allowing the little children of the village
To wash clean its white tusks,
The huge elephant lies on the river bank.
O great king ! you favour me like that.
But to approach an elephant in rut is death,
And you are death to your enemies.”

A famine is thus described,—

“The hearth has forgotten cooking,
It is overgrown with moss and mould.
The woman, thin with hunger,
Has breasts like wrinkled bladders.
Their nipples are quite dry,
But the child chews them, weeping.

She looks down at his face
And tears hang on her lashes."

[Both are from the *Purananuru*.

In the following poem from the *Ahananuru* the girl companion of the lady in love tries to console her on the eve of the separation from her lover.

" Your lover has not yet decided to cross
The forest river, on whose waters sail the small boats
And which are rudely disturbed by wild elephants.
Yet your brow has lost its lustre,
Even as the bank of the river in Urandai (Uraiyr),
Of the Chola, whose war-drum announces victories,
Lies desolate and silent with quenched hearths and
strewn leaves,

The day after the Panguni festival.
Your shoulders likewise have lost their lustre.
How can I bear this ?"

The following are from the *Kuruntogai*

" O bee, fair of wing, ever in search of flower garlands,
Tell me not what I fain would hear, but what you really
saw,

Among all the flowers you know is any more fragrant
Than the tresses of my lady of the beautiful teeth ?
Graceful as the peacock she dwells, rich in love, with
me !"

" Her fingers, slender as the *kandal* blossom, had been
churning the new curds ;
Her clothes had not been washed since she wiped her
fingers on them ;

The appetizing steam had got into her lily-like eyes
Yet, as she rubbed them, he just said,

' The curry you have cooked is delicious.'

He of the bright brow was most pleased with what he
was eating."

In a poem of the *Kalittogai* a sage consoles, with the following words, the mother of a daughter, who has eloped with her lover :

“Save to the wearer of its scent,
Of what use is the sandalwood tree,
Even to the mountains amid which it was born ?
If you ponder the matter, it is so with your daughter.”

“Except to the wearer of it
Of what avail is the highly prized white pearl,
Even to the sea in which it was reared ?
If you ponder the matter, it is so with your daughter.”

A poem of the *Narrinai* contains the following lament of a neglected wife :

“My garment smells of ghee and frying curry,
And is stained with dirt and smoke.
My shoulders stink with the sweat of the child,
Whom I carry upon them and feed at my breast
I cannot face my lord, who, in gay attire
Rides in his car to the street of the harlots.”

The poems of the *Padinen kilkanakku* show more evidences of Aryan influence than those of the earlier ones of the Eight Anthologies and the Ten Idylls. Of the former the *Tirukkural* and the *Naladiyar* are the most famous. Reference to the ethical ideals contained in these poems has already been made under ‘Hindu ethics.’ The *Tirukkural*, which has been translated into many Indian and foreign languages, is divided into three sections, viz., *Aram* or Dharma, *Porul* or Public life and *Kama* or Love and contains more than 1,000 couplets, the first line containing four words or word compounds and the second line three.

The following are a few examples :

“The way to take revenge upon a wrong doer
Is to put him to shame by doing him good.”

“ Learn without fault what is to be learned ;
And then live up to your learning.”

“ Like the hand of one who has lost his garment
A true friend rushes in case of trouble.”

“ Even the hermit ceases his penance,
If the peasant folds his arms.”

“ Earth laughs in scorn
At those who plead poverty.”

“ Vain is the kingdom where are all good things
But no love between the ruler and the ruled.”

“ Sweethearts delight in a lover's quarrel
For the greater delight of making it up.”

The following are from the *Naladiyar* (Quartets) :

“ Hillmen remember their lovely hills ;
Farmers remember their fertile fields ;
The good remember another's kindness ;
The base recall only fancied slights.”

“ True housekeeping is to eat a meal
Sharing, as far as possible, with friend and foe
alike ;

The useless men who eat their food alone
Will never pass the gateway of heaven.”

“ As a scroll read by one who well understands it,
As wealth to the man of generous spirit,
As a sharp sword in a warrior's hand,
Is the beauty of a faithful wife.”

The Epics

By the close of the Sangam age Hinduism, Buddhism
and Jainism had taken firm roots in the South Indian soil
and some of her kings and chieftains were ardent supporters

of the heterodox faiths. The *kavya* or long poem, was known and the first Tamil long poem, though very much different from the Sanskrit *kavya*, was the *Silappadikaram* (The Story of the Anklet) written, according to tradition, in the second century A.D. by Ilango-Adigal, a Jain monk. Some scholars do not accept the traditional account of its authorship but assign the epic to the seventh century A.D. The epic unlike the classical Sanskrit works, deal with a realistic and tragic theme, the pathetic story of Kovalan and Kannagi. Kovalan, the son of a wealthy merchant of Puhar or Kavarippattinam, the seaport town of the Cholas, married Kannagi, the daughter of another merchant. He led a happy home life until his eyes fell on Madhavi, a beautiful courtesan, in the course of a festival. Then he forgot his home and wife and spent all his fortunes on his mistress. Repentent, at last, he came back to his uncomplaining wife, who gave up her precious pair of anklets, the last of her jewellery ; and with it the pair went to Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas, with the object of selling it and starting anew. Reaching Madurai after an arduous journey by foot Kovalan left his wife in a cottage and took one anklet to the market for sale. Unfortunately he was seen by the court jeweller of the Pandya who had recently robbed one of the queen's anklets. Without making proper inquiries the king ordered the execution of Kovalan. When the news reached Kannagi she was overcome with grief. Then her grief turned into rage. With the remaining anklet in her hand she went into the town telling the people of what had happened.

“ In the brief twilight
Kannagi cried aloud
and the whole city
echoed her wailing.....

“Are there women here? Are there women
who could bear such a wrong
done to their wedded lords?

Are there women here? Are there such women?

“Are there good men here? Are there good men
who cherish their children
and guard them with care?

Are there men here? Are there such men?

“Is there a god here? Is there a God
in this city of Madurai, where the sword of a king
has slain an innocent man?

Is there a god here? Is there a god?”

As Kannagi proceeded to the palace of the king, the
queen had forebodings of the coming disaster.

“I saw, alas, I saw in a dream
The sceptre fall and the royal umbrella.
The bell at the palace gate rang of itself,
while the whole heaven shook in confusion!

“A darkness swallowed the sun,
a rainbow glowed in the night,
and a burning meteor
crashed to the earth by day.”

She explained to the king her dream:

“Then came a cry from the gate;
O, gatekeeper! O, gatekeeper!
O, gatekeeper of the king who has lost wisdom
whose evil heart has swerved from justice!

“Tell the king that a woman with an anklet,
an anklet from a pair of tinkling anklets,
a woman who has lost her husband,
is waiting at the gate.”

Kannagi met the king and asked him, "What are the contents of your anklet?" "Pearls," replied the king. "Mine contains diamonds," said Kannagi and broke her anklet on the ground. Gleaming diamonds scattered from the broken pieces. The king at once knew that Kovalan was innocent.

"When he saw it the parasol fell from his head
and the sceptre trembled in his hand.

'I am no king,' he said,

'who have heeded the words of the goldsmith.

"I am the thief. For the first time

I have failed to protect my people."

So saying the king fell to the ground dead. Kannagi's rage now turned against the city of Madurai. She cursed that the city be destroyed like the king.

"With her own hand she tore the left breast from her
body.

Thrice she surveyed the city of Madurai,
Calling her curse in bitter agony.

Then she flung her fair breast on the scented
street.

"The burning mouth of the fire god opened,
and the gods who guarded the city closed their
doors...

"The high priest, the astrologer and the judges,
The treasurer and the learned councillors,
The palace servants and the maids,
stood silent and still as painted pictures.

"The elephant-riders and horsemen,
the charioteers and the foot soldiers
with their terrible swords, all fled from the fire
which raged at the gate of the royal palace..."

The fire soon spread to the street of the grain merchants and that of the singing and dancing girls, and the whole city was engulfed in fire and confusion. At last the goddess guarding the city interceded with Kannagi, who agreed to withdraw her curse and the fire abated. The heroine then left the ruined city and retired to a neighbouring hill where, after a few days, she died. A heavenly chariot came along with Kovalan and took Kannagi, who came to be deified and worshipped as the goddess of chastity. The climax of the poem has, according to Basham, "a grimly baroque force and splendour, unparalleled elsewhere in Indian literature. It is imbued with both the ferocity of the early Tamils and their stern respect for justice, and incidentally, throws much light on the character of early Tamil kingship."

The *Manimekalai* was composed sometime after the *Silappadikaram* as a sort of continuing or companion epic. It deals with the story of Manimekalai, the daughter of Madhavi and Kovalan. Madhavi became a Buddhist nun after the death of Kovalan. Prince Udayakumara loved her daughter, who after a period of trial becomes a Buddhist nun like her mother. As a narrative poem the *Manimekalai* offers a poor contrast with its twin epic. Much of the poem is taken up with a discussion of Buddhist philosophy and the story element receives scant attention. The work was written by Sattanar, a merchant of Madurai.

A still later epic, belonging to the tenth century, was the *Jivaka-Chintamani* by Tiruttakka Devar, a Jaina monk. It deals with the adventures of Prince Jivaka, who won a bride after everyone of his triumphs. Finally he became a Jain monk.

These three epics, viz., *Silappadikaram*, *Manimekalai* and *Jivaka Chintamani* and two others, which are not extant, viz., *Valayapathi* and *Kundalakesi* are well known in Tamil literature as the Five Great Kavyas.

Patronage of the Cholas : Kamban

The Chola period, c. 900-1300, was a great age in the History of Tamil literature, when it showed great receptivity to the influences of classical Sanskrit *kavyas*. The *alankaras* (called *ani* in Tamil), particularly the employment of *dhvani* or sound to illustrate the meaning (*bhava*) became common. The greatest effect was the *Ramayana* of Kamban, which was an adaptation in Tamil of Valmiki's *Ramayana*; Kamban's originality, however, shines forth throughout the treatment in the narrative of the plot as well as the description of individual scenes. At his hands the story becomes more human and realistic. The work is one of the greatest loved poems of Tamil literature. Kamban, Ottakootan and Sekkilar were great poets who were patronised by Chola Kulottunga II (1135—50) and his feudatories. Sekkilar was the author of *Tiruttondar Puranam* or *Periya Puranam*, which deals with the lives of Saiva saints and which is the best piece of Saiva devotional literature. This work was intended to counter the influence of the Jain works of the period. The earlier devotional works of the *Thevaram* and the *Nalayiraprabandam* have already been referred to. These were collected together and edited in the tenth century. Many of the important grammatical works of the period were written by Jains, e.g., the *Yapparungalam*, the *Neminadam* and the *Nannul*. Pugalendi, who sang the *Nalavenba*, is assigned to the thirteenth century.

CHAPTER 10

ISLAM'S IMPACT ON INDIA

SECTION I

The Arab, Afghan and Mughal Conquest

In 712 A.D. Muhammad-bin-Kasim, a general of the Arab governor of Persia, conquered Sind. That was the first Muslim conquest in India. Sind remained a part of the Arab empire for over 150 years. This, however, did not give a foretaste of what was to follow in the thirteenth century later, of Muslim domination and oppression of the Hindus under the Delhi Sultanate (1206—1526). For one thing, the Kaliph of Baghdad, the head of the Arab empire in the east, was not interested in making conquests in India beyond Sind. But the real cause was the fact that the Arabs were tolerant towards the Hindus. The governor of Sind, who succeeded Muhammad-bin-Kasim, allowed the Hindus freedom of worship on payment of a tax (the *jezya*). They were employed in large numbers in the administrative services, particularly in the lower ranks, of course out of necessity, and the conquerors were not averse to marrying their women. The impact was more on the Arabs and Arab civilization than on the Hindus. The Arab conquest in India helped the diffusion of Hindu culture throughout the Arab empire, which included a part of Europe (Spain). The Hindu numerals (called the Arabic numerals) and the sciences of astronomy, medicine, mathematics and algebra passed on into Europe through Arab channels. The Kaliphs of Baghdad, especially Harun-al-Rashid (786—809), patronised Hindu astronomers and physicians. The *Charaka Samhita* and the *Panchatantra* were translated into Arabic, and the latter became the parent of children's animal tales in Europe as referred to above.

Muhammad of Ghazni (Afghanistan) invaded India seventeen times between 1000 and 1027 and plundered the great Hindu temple cities of Kanauj, Mathura, Kangra, Thanesar and Somnathpur. The numerous temples of Mathura were razed to the ground and their gold and silver images and articles were melted down. From Nagarkot he carried away "700 maunds of gold and silver vessels, 200 maunds of pure gold, 2,000 maunds of unwrought silver and 20 maunds of various jewels." At Somnathpur the priests tried to save the idol by offering money to the iconoclast but the latter is said to have declared that he was an 'idol-breaker' and not an 'idol-seller.'

While Muhammad of Ghazni had no interest in India save as a fertile field for plunder, Muhammad of Ghor, another Afghan principality, invaded India with the view of founding a kingdom. The Rajaputs who opposed his entry into India did not present a united front and so they failed. Prithviraj Chohan of Ajmer defeated him in the first battle of Tarain, near Panipat, in 1191 but was defeated at the same place next year. This victory led to the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi in 1206. From this year right up to the rise of the British power in India in the eighteenth century the Muslims dominated the political scene. The Hindus became a subject people and their kings and chieftains maintained a tributary or semi-independent status. The Vijayanagar kings and the Mahrattas under Shivaji and the early Peshwas led a Hindu revivalist movement and established in their own dominions independent Hindu kingdoms.

The Afghan kingdom in India, more popularly called the Delhi Sultanate, was overthrown in 1526 when the Mughal empire was founded in its place. The Mughals were Turkish Muslims, who continued the policy of their predecessors of persecution of the Hindus. Akbar was a noble exception to this rule but his policy was not followed by his successors.

Under Aurangzeb (1659-1707) the reactionary policy reached its culmination. It raised the determined opposition of the Rajaput, the Mahrattas and the Sikhs to the Mughal empire, which was greatly weakened as a result.

SECTION II

Government under the Muslim Rulers

The Emperor a despot :

His daily routine : Palace establishments

The Muslim government was essentially a theocracy and the avowed purpose of the king was to rule in accordance with the Quran and to propagate Islam (*Shariat*). He was legally the agent and subordinate of the Khalif of Baghdad. In practice he ruled as an independent monarch and his government was not under the control of any external or internal religious authority (*Saltanat*). While some Sultans of Delhi tried to obtain the investiture of the Khalif the Mughal emperors did not hanker after it. The king was a despot. Neither the ministers nor the *Kazis*, i.e., the Muslim divines, could bind him. He was the supreme executive, legislative and judicial authority. He was the commander of the army and he appointed the generals and the high officers of the civil departments. Subject to the Quranic law the king was supreme in religious matters also. He was the pivot of the administration. The real source of his strength and authority was his army.

The office of the king, e.g., the Mughal emperor, was no bed of roses. His daily routine was exacting. He rose before dawn, said his prayers, and shortly after sunrise showed himself at the *jarokha*, a window high up in the palace, from where he received the obeisance of his subjects gathered below. At about 8 a.m. he entered the Public Audience

Hall or Durbar Hall (*Diwani Am*), where he sat in state in a high alcove with his sons, ministers and personal attendants, while in the hall below stood the courtiers, officers, nobles and gentry in the order of their rank. Here he heard petitions, received reports or disposed of judicial cases. At 10 a.m. he moved into the Private Audience Hall (*Diwani Khas*), where he dealt with administrative work and state affairs, which could not be heard in public. At about 12 noon he entered the Royal Tower (*Shah Burj*), where the most confidential business was transacted. Half-an-hour was given to this and then the emperor retired to the harem, where he said his noon prayer and had his meal, followed by a nap. After this his chief queen reported to him cases of destitute women deserving help—poor widows and orphans, maidens of decayed families, daughters of poor scholars, divines etc., and to them he gave lands, pensions, jewels, garments, dowries etc., as the case might be. After finishing his afternoon prayer he again visited and transacted business in the Public and Private Audience Halls. At the latter place, he gave only a short time to administrative work, then he said his evening prayer along with the congregation gathered there, and then till 8 p.m. heard music, both vocal and instrumental, and witnessed dance performances. Then he said his night prayer and retired to the harem. After supper he listened to songs rendered by women skilled in music, and then “His Majesty retired to bed and was read to sleep. Good readers sat behind a *pardah*, which separated them from the royal bedchamber, and read aloud books on travel, lives of saints and prophets and histories of former kings,—all rich in instruction.”*

The Mughal court was famous for its grandeur and pomp. The court hall was tastefully decorated with paint-

UP State Museum, Lucknow
* J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*. p. 13.

ings and velvet canopies richly embroidered with gold. The hall itself was surrounded by silver railings. The emperor appeared highly bedecked with precious stones and sat on the throne, attended on by two bearers, who stood on either side of the throne holding golden banners. Shah Jahan made for himself the famous Peacock Throne at the cost of a crore of rupees. It was in the form of a cot with golden legs. Twelve emerald pillars supported the roof, on either side of which was the figure of a peacock "ablaze with diamonds." A tree set with diamonds, rubies, etc., figured between the two peacocks. Three jewelled steps were provided to reach the seat. This throne, which took seven years to build was carried away by Nadir Shah of Persia in 1739. No one was to turn his back on the emperor. Everyone was to advance and retire facing him. Towards the evening the hall was lit up by lights placed in the chandeliers and music was played in a subdued tone without disturbing the court business.

The palace establishments included the palace administrative offices, workshops or *karkhanas*, stables for elephants and horses and the harem. The workshops employed thousands of slaves and supplied almost all the palace requirements like textiles, carpets, metal work, leather goods, armaments etc. In the heyday of the Mughal empire the harem contained 5,000 women of different nationalities. It was divided into a number of sections. Each member had her own apartment and drew a salary of Rs. 1,000 to 1,600 a month. According to William Hawkins, the ambassador of James I of England to Jahangir, the harem cost Rs. 30,000 a day. A staff of clerks and accountants regulated the expenditure and wrote the accounts. Armed female guards kept watch within the harem, while the eunuchs stood guard outside and beyond them the Rajaputs and others.

Succession

There was no fixed or accepted law of succession, and almost every time the question was settled by open fighting among the claimants, sons, grandsons, nephews and all collateral relations, the ablest of whom ascended the throne after killing or blinding all his rivals. Besides seriously challenging the authority of the emperor the frequent wars of succession produced disorder and anarchy in many parts of the empire.

The king's ministers and officers

Though the Muslim king was an absolute monarch he could not run the administration without the advice and help of ministers and officers. In the Mughal period the *Vakil* was the chief minister. He was the practical head of the administration and could appoint or dismiss any officer. The *Vizier* or *Dewan* was the finance minister. The *Khan-i-Saman* or the High Steward had charge of the entire imperial household and palace administration. The *Mir-Bakshi* was the military Pay and Accounts Officer. He had also other functions. The *Sadr-i-Sudur* or Chief Sadr was the chief Ecclesiastical Officer. He investigated cases of heresy and could pass a death sentence on a heretic. His powers and prestige suffered a steep decline during the reign of Akbar, who was himself a heretic in the eyes of the orthodox. The *Sadr* was assisted by a number of *kazis* or masters of the Muslim law. These enjoyed much power in the reign of Aurangzeb, who appointed, in addition, a number of *Muhtasibs* or Censors of Public Morals to enforce the injunctions of the Quran. Other important officers were the *Daroga-i-Dak Chowki*, i.e., Head of the Department of Correspondence, *Mustafa-i-Mumalik* or the Auditor-General, *Mushrif-i-Mumalik* or the Accountant-General and *Kotwal* or the Police Chief.

Provincial and local government

The unit of administration was the village, where the population was predominantly Hindu and where the old type of government with the panchayat, the headman and the accountant continued to function without any change. Villages were grouped into *parganahs* and *parganahs* into *sirkars* or districts. The province was called the *subha* and the provincial governor the *subhadar*, who set up a government, which "was an exact miniature of the central government." Under the Sultanate he enjoyed greater freedom and power than under the Mughals, who exercised greater authority and control over the provinces than their predecessors. Under the latter he could not dismiss the officers appointed by the emperor, nor could he execute a death sentence without imperial sanction. He was usually a military officer of the emperor and his tenure depended on the latter's pleasure.

The revenue system

For taxation purposes the Muslims and the Hindus were differently treated. The Muslims had to pay *zakat* or religious taxes while the Hindus had to pay the *jezya* and the various *abwabs* or cesses like the house tax, grazing tax, water tax etc. The *kharaj* or the land tax varied from one-third to one half of the gross produce. Both under Alaud-din Khilji and Aurangzeb it was one half. Land revenue was the most fruitful source of income and its collection was usually entrusted to the tax-farming jagirdars. Tax farming was a great evil as the jagirdars were prone to collect more than the legal due. Alaud-din Khilji and Sher Shah did away with intermediaries. After Sher Shah the jagir system reappeared. With the help of his capable revenue minister, Toder Mall, Akbar once again reintroduced direct contact between the cultivator and the government, i.e., the ryotwari system. Lands were carefully surveyed and the

tax was fixed on the basis of continuity of cultivation or, in other words, fertility. The rates thus fixed were not to be varied. The great merit of this system was that the tax payable was known to the peasant and was not open to arbitrary variations. The Fixed or Regulation System served as the basis of the revenue system of the British Government of India.

Justice

Law in general was Islamic law as expounded by the Quran. The criminal law was common to both the Hindus and the Muslims, but in civil cases the former were governed by the *Dharamasastras*. The Chief Justice was the *Kazi-ul-Kazat* or the Chief Kazi, who was assisted by a number of subordinate kazis or Muslim divines learned in Quranic law.* Their assistance was sought after by the Subhadar, the Faujdar (commander of the army) and the Kotwal, who heard cases and pronounced judgments in a summary manner. Fines were imposed and severe punishments like amputation, mutilation and whipping were inflicted by these officers without any reference to the emperor, but his consent was necessary for carrying out a death sentence. From them appeals lay to the Chief Kazi and to the emperor, who was the fountain of justice. Jahangir's 'Bell of Justice' was meant to enable even the humblest subject to seek redress from the highest authority. The *kazis* were notoriously corrupt but much feared by the public for their influence. The popular saying was "when the *kazi's* bitch died the whole town was at the funeral, when the *kazi* himself died not a soul followed the coffin."

Army

The Delhi Sultans and the Mughal emperors kept a

Often the two offices of *Sadr-i-Sudur* and the *Kazi-ul-Kazat* were combined in one and the *sparganah*, Lucknow

standing army at the capital which was reinforced in times of need from the levies sent by the provincial governors and subordinate chiefs. Under Akbar every servant of the empire, high or low, military or civil, was given a rank in the cavalry and he was expected to join battle with the number of horses associated with his rank. This was called the *Mansabdari* system. The mainstay of the Muslim army was cavalry. The elephants had ceased to be a regular wing of the army. While cavalry service was regarded with respect, services in the infantry or artillery were regarded as no better than menial services. Under the Sultans no regular artillery had developed, but gun-powder was used to project from crude machines missiles like fireballs, stones, iron balls, and bottles of naphtha or poisonous creatures like snakes and scorpions. Under the Mughals guns and cannon had come into use, but their firing was slow and inaccurate and often failed to make any impression on strong fortresses like Asirgarh. The army was organized on a decimal basis.

As the army grew in size and numerous it became less and less efficient. Management was difficult and there was no united command. The jealousies and bitter rivalries of the *Mansabdars*, who recruited the contingents, often spoiled the chances of victory. False muster was a common evil. "Nobles would lend to each other men to make up their quota or needy idlers from the bazars would be mounted on the first baggage pony that came to hand and counted in with the others as efficient soldiers." The troops had neither drill nor training nor uniform. The commissariat service was completely absent. Each trooper was expected to make his own arrangement for food and transport. Grain dealers in large numbers, huge bazars and innumerable non-combatants accompanied the army. The camp was a veritable city on the move. It was encumbered with all the lavish paraphernalia of the imperial court, including a

UP State Museum, Lucknow

portion of the harem and its attendants, mounted on elephants and camels, and a travelling audience hall, musicians' gallery, offices, workshops and bazars. "Life in such a camp produced luxury and indiscipline. According to the Italian traveller Manucci, "30,000 good European soldiers could easily sweep away the authority of the Mughal and occupy the whole of his empire".

SECTION III

Economic conditions

Agriculture

Agriculture was prosperous, particularly in the Doab, and barring periods of famine, the supply of foodgrains was plentiful and cheap. Food crops were largely grown and money crops like jute, cotton and sugarcane were not grown in large quantities for trade. The cultivation of tobacco and chillies was newly introduced by the Portuguese during the Mughal period. Egged by foreign demand for silk the farmers in certain areas took to sericulture.

Industries and crafts : Trade

The only large scale industrial establishments were the royal *karkhanas* or workshops, which employed hundreds of weavers and other artisans. Most private industries were domestic, the artisans following their traditional family or caste professions—cotton, woollen and silk weaving, calico printing, metal work, stone cutting, shoe-making, manufacture of scents, spirits and liquors, furniture making mostly of wood, manufacture of saltpetre, etc. The artisans, however, were not entirely independent. They did not own their raw materials and tools, which were supplied by middlemen, mostly nobles. Neither were they organized in guilds like their forefathers in the ancient period. They often worked

for low wages. They had to pay a number of taxes and were also subject to oppression by revenue officials who demanded a number of *abwabs* or illegal cesses. The manufacture of cotton textiles was the most important industry throughout the Mughal empire. Patan in Gujerat, Burhanpur in Khandesh, Jaunpur, Banaras and Patna were the chief centres. The Dacca district was specially reputed for its delicate muslin fabrics. Manufacture of carpets, blankets and shawls of wool and hair was the chief industry in Kashmir and the Punjab.

The internal market for the products of the above industries was limited to the demands of the ruling classes, the nobles and foreign merchants. The bulk of the common folk had very few needs and did not demand artistic products. Wheat, textiles, opium, indigo, ginger, sugar and saltpetre were the chief exports. Of these cotton textiles were the most important and were exported to Arabia, East Africa, Egypt, Europe, Burma and Indonesia. In return for these exports the traders got bullion, articles of luxury like wines, velvets, brocades, Persian carpets, and Arabian horses, Chinese porcelain goods and African slaves. Trade was carried both by land and by sea. The two chief land routes lay through Kabul and Kandahar from Lahore and Multan respectively. The main seaports were Surat, Bassein, Goa, Calicut, Cochin, Satgaon, Sonargaon and Chittagong (in Bengal) and Masulipatam and Negapatam on the east coast.

SECTION IV

Conflict of Cultures

Hindu and Muslim : Resilience of the Hindus

While the cultures of the earlier invaders, *viz.*, the Greeks, the Sakas, the Kushanas and the Huns were absorbed entirely within the fold of Hinduism, that of the Turko-

Afghan invaders was so fundamentally opposed to the religious and social ideas of the Hindus that the Islamic culture not only did not lose its identity but was engaged in a serious attempt to swamp the native culture and institutions. The Muslim conquerors were no doubt a small minority but they kept the vast majority of the native Hindu population in a state of utter subjection. They kept themselves sternly aloof and except under Akbar carefully avoided racial mixture. According to orthodox Muslim opinion the only alternative that lay before the Hindus was either conversion to Islam or death. However, as a practical course, they were allowed to be 'zimmi' or protected non-Muslims by entering into a 'zimma' or contract with the state, by which the latter agreed to protect their life and property in return for their loyalty and payment of the 'jezya' or compensation (for being spared from death), which was a sort of poll tax on every Hindu and which varied according to the wealth of the payer. For about 150 years the Brahmans were exempted from this tax but Firoz Shah Tughlak (1351—88) did away with the discrimination. Besides the *jezya* the Hindus had to pay other taxes like the pilgrim tax and the grazing tax and also suffer from many social disabilities. Sultan Alauddin Khilji (1296—1316) imposed special restrictions on the Hindus, e.g., no Hindu could ride a horse or carry arms or wear fine clothes. They became so poor that "an average Hindu house came to lack even the betel-leaf and nut, and the wives of impoverished native officials were reduced to taking service in Muslim families." Aurangzeb (1659—1707), the last great Mughal, prohibited the public celebration of important Hindu festivals like the *Dasara*, *Dipavali* and *Holi*. He ordered the systematic destruction of all Hindu temples in his empire. It became the normal duty of the *Muhtasibs* or Censors of Public Morals to go round and destroy Hindu

and Sikh temples within their jurisdiction. The three most famous temples which suffered under this ordinance were those of Somnath at Patan (Gujerat), Vishvanath at Banaras and Keshavrai at Mathura. In Rajaputana, 66 temples were destroyed in Amber and 239 in Udaipur and Chitor. In many cases cows were slaughtered in the sanctum before the actual work of demolition began and the idols were pulled out and thrown in the market square to be trodden upon by the Muslims. Hindu women did not feel secure in public places and they adopted the veil from the Muslims to protect themselves from the unwelcome attentions of the ruling aristocracy. In course of time the veil became a mark of respectability among Hindu women.

In spite of the Muslim onslaughts like forced conversion, social persecution and the destruction of temples and other religious institutions Hindu culture did not perish as did that of Persia under similar conditions. For one thing, among the Hindus there were still members of the old ruling families, land owners, merchants and high priests, who bore the titles *Rai, Rana, Thakur, Mehta, Pandit* etc., and who formed a sort of Hindu aristocracy and from whom the Muslims were not averse to taking girls in marriage but not *vice versa*. Poor Muslims eked a livelihood as servants in their houses. Barani records with regret that even in the capital Muslim beggars could be seen begging in front of Hindu houses. Secondly, the Muslim government of the day could not dispense with the services of all Hindu officials, especially in the department of land revenue and at the village level. Again, the liberal policy of Akbar (1556—1605) restored, to a great extent, the position of the Hindus. He married Rajput princesses, entrusted high offices in the military and other departments to the Hindus, abolished the *jezya*, and patronised Hindu artists. He expressed great dissatisfaction against the bigotry of the ortho-

dox Muslims and made a noble attempt to establish a new universal faith, the *Din Ilahi*. The doctrines of this faith were laid down after the emperor's discussions with the learned doctors and pandits of the Muslim, Hindu, Jain, Parsi and Christian faiths. The attempt, of course, was a failure.

Rapprochement between the two cultures

Sufism. Bhakti cult

The bitter strife between the Muslim and Hindu cultures, as pointed to above, did not end in the triumph of the one or the abatement of the other. In spite of the unending hostilities on the political plane the two cultures ultimately settled down through long association, growth in the number of converted Muslims, inter-communal marriages and the influence of liberal religious movements to a position of recognition of one another and mutual respect for each other. Alberuni was perhaps the first Muslim scholar who tried to explain Hindu religion and philosophy to the Muslim world. One of the important sources of Muslim mysticism was the contact with Hinduism. Great Muslim saints and scholars who lived in India exhibited commendable tolerance and understanding of the Indian culture while they tried to spread the knowledge of Islamic philosophy. The Muslim saints, philosophers and poets of the liberal *Sufi* school, who lived and preached in India, knew that there was not much difference between the essentials of Hinduism and Islam. In the same way, there arose a liberal Hindu school of saints and preachers, who placed emphasis on *Bhakti* or devotion to one god without distinction of caste or community. The mutual understanding and respect for the two faiths were so great that Muslim saints were worshipped by the Hindus and *vice versa*: This practice ultimately led to the common worship of *Satyapir* (the True Saint). Sanskrit works on philosophy, astrology, medicine and music were translated and

studied by Muslim scholars. The Hindus on their part adopted some technical terms and calculations in astronomy, a branch of horoscopy in astrology, and knowledge of the metallic acids in medicine, from Muslim works. A spectacular result of the mingling of the Muslim and the Hindu soldiery was the evolution of Urdu (camp language), which was a mixture of Persian and Hindi. From the Muslims the Hindus learnt better cavalry tactics. Finally, the Islamic emphasis on the unity and omnipotence of God made the Hindu leaders put forward similar ideas, which were, however, already well known to the Hindu scripture. The new ideas were liberal in character. They repudiated caste and communal differences and emphasised the equality of God's worshippers—low-born and high-born, Hindu and Muslim. *Bhakti* or unqualified devotion to God was the means to attain salvation.

The first reaction of the Hindus against Muslim persecution was one of contempt and withdrawal. They regarded the Muslims as casteless *mlecchas*, shunned their society and began to pay greater attention to religious ceremonies and caste distinctions. The intensification of rituals and caste regimentation produced in its turn a liberal reaction, whose prophets were Ramanand, Vallabha, Chaitanya, Kabir and Nanak. These were the new prophets of *Bhakti*, which had been recently restated by Ramanuja (twelfth century) and Madhwa (thirteenth century). The earliest of the *Bhakti* preachers, who advocated the equality of religions, the unity of godhead and a simple religion based on unaffected devotion and faith, unfettered by caste, birth, rituals and priestcraft was Ramanand. Though his date is not definitely known he is generally placed in the fourteenth century. He belonged to a Brahmin family of Allahabad. He travelled through the holy places of North India, worshipping and singing the praise of Rama. He preached in Hindi. Among his

twelve principal disciples there was a barber, a cobbler and a Muslim weaver. Mirabai, the celebrated Rajaput princess of Chitor who left her palace to seek divine bliss, was the disciple of a disciple of Ramanand. Her *bhajans* in Hindi and Gujerati are well known.

Vallabhacharya was born in 1479 in Benares of a Telugu Brahmin family, which had gone there on a pilgrimage. He was a boy-prodigy, and after finishing his education he visited Vijayanagar, where he defeated the Saiva Pandits in a public disputation. He visited the holy places and finally settled in Benares and wrote several works, including the *Bhagavata Tika Subodhini*. He taught that the individual soul and the universal soul or *Brahman* are identical and that the former's bondage due to delusion can be broken by means of *bhakti*. This doctrine of monism was called *Suddha-advaita*. His favourite god was Krishna. The Krishna-Gopi cult was abused by his followers, who emphasised the physical side of Krishna's sports. A western writer (Monier-Williams) says that the religion of Vallabhacharya "became in its degenerate form the Epicureanism of the East."

Chaitanya (1485-1533), a contemporary of Vallabhacharya, was the most popular Vaishnava saint of North India. He belonged to a learned Brahmin family of Bengal. He read widely and deeply, grew tired of material living and became a *sannyasin* at the age of twentyfour. He lived and taught in Orissa and the Deccan. He taught absolute surrender to Krishna and asked his followers to worship the Lord through song and dance and in such an ecstatic state, he said, the worshippers could feel the physical presence of God. Among his followers were low class Hindus and Muslims.

Namadeva, who probably belonged to the first half of the fifteenth century, lived and preached in Maharashtra. He was a cloth-dyer by profession. He regarded idol worship and rituals as unimportant and declared that salvation could

be attained only through love of God. Among his followers were a few Muslim converts to Hinduism.

Kabir and Nanak were the greatest apostles of the new liberal cult of *bhakti*. The life of Kabir is shrouded in obscurity. He is variously placed in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Most probably he lived in the latter half of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth centuries. According to legend he was the abandoned child of a Brahmin widow, brought up by a Muhammadan weaver called Niru, and his wife. Tradition has it that he was one of the twelve principal disciples of Ramanand. He was greatly influenced by the liberal thought of his age, both Hindu (*Bhakti*) and Muslim (Sufism). In his verses he claimed that he was the child of Allah and Ram and declared that Hindu and Turk were pots of the same clay. He denounced caste and all forms of ritualism both in Hinduism and Islam, condemned the insincerity and hypocrisy of the priesthood, and advocated *bhajan* as the true means of salvation. His following included both Hindus and Muslims, and both, it is said, claimed his corpse when he died. When the shroud was lifted, says the legend, nothing was found except a heap of flowers, which was divided between his Hindu and Muslim followers. Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was the spiritual successor of Kabir. Born in 1469 of a Khatri family of Talwandi (near Lahore), he preached the unity of godhead and condemned formalism both in Hinduism and Islam. Like Kabir he declared :

“Religion consisteth not in mere words ;
 He who looketh on all men as equal is religious.
 Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places
 of cremation, or sitting in attitudes of contemplation.
 Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries,
 or in bathing at places of pilgrimage.

Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world ;
Thus shalt thou find the way to religion."

Nanak preached with great zeal and enlisted many Muslims to his fold.

SECTION V

Muslim Architecture

The Indo-Islamic style of architecture

The Muslims did not depend on stone as much as the Hindus for their building material but made a free use of brick, mortar and concrete. They spanned wide spaces with arches and roofed wide areas with domes. They erected tall and slender minars and minarets round about their tombs and mosques, used the sacred texts for purposes of decoration and coloured stones, tiles and marble pieces for adornment. These are some of the unique features of the Muslim style. There were also some features of the Indian style like the open courtyard, enclosures of chambers or colonnades and decorative carvings. These common features were bound to be there because, firstly, many Hindu temples were converted into mosques with the necessary adjustments and alterations and, secondly, while building new mosques Hindu artisans and sculptors had to be employed, who naturally continued the old tradition. Hence the Muslim style of architecture in India was neither totally exotic, as held by Fergusson and others, nor entirely Indian in "soul and body," as assumed by Havell. It was in fact a fusion of the Arab, Persian and Turkish styles with the Indian style with local variations.

Buildings of the Delhi Sultans

Delhi, which the Muslims occupied in 1191, was originally a Rajaput fort containing the strong citadel known as Lalkot or Red Fort. Within this fort a series of Muslim

monuments were erected. Kutb-ud-din (1206—10) built a mosque called *Kuwwat-ul-Islam* or the Might of Islam from materials shipped from Hindu temples. In front of the prayer hall an arched screen with two lesser arches on either side was erected. The height of the arch at its central point is 53'. The arched screen contains superb carvings of the sacred texts, "an instance of fine co-operation between the Muslim calligraphist and Indian carvers." Altamish (1236—46) made additions to the prayer hall and almost doubled the area of the mosque. The famous Kutb-Minar at Delhi near the *Kuwwat-ul-Islam* was begun by Kutb-ud-din Aibek and finished by Altamish. The Minar was perhaps originally meant as a tower from the top of which the *muezzim* could give his call to prayer, but soon came to be looked upon as a Tower of Victory. When completed by Altamish it rose to 225' and contained four storeys. In the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlak (1351—88) the top storey was struck by lightning and was replaced by two smaller ones. The height now increased to 234'. At the top of each storey there is a circular balcony. The storey itself contains inscriptions of sacred texts. The tomb of Balban (1266—86) at Delhi is characteristically an Islamic structure, dominated by the dome and the arch.

The two principal monuments of Ala-ud-din Khilji (1296-1366) are the *Jama'at Khana Masjid* and the *Alai-Darwaza*, near the *Kutb-Minar*, which acted as the gateway to his extension of the *Kuwwat-ul-Islam*. Both, belonging to the Kutb group of buildings in Delhi, are good examples of pure Islamic art. Both are built of red sand-stone. The latter is noted for its exquisite carvings and fine arched windows with the sacred texts inscribed on all sides.

The buildings of the period of the Tughlaks (1320—1412) were simple and prosaic and had lost the grandeur and luxurious ornamentation of the earlier period. Firoz Shah

Tughlak (1351—88) loved building. He constructed two cities, viz., Firozabad (New Delhi) and Jaunpur. He repaired many old monuments and started a Department of Public Works to prepare plans and estimates and for purposes of economy. The palace-fort of Firozabad, called Firoz Shah Kotta contained a mosque and a pyramidal structure crowned by the Asokan pillar removed from Topra.

Mughal Architecture

The Mugals are justly famous for their building, many of which may be considered to be the best examples of Indo-Muslim architecture. Under them, particularly under Akbar, there was a greater and freer mingling of Muslim and Hindu ideas than under the Sultans. The design and architectural principles followed were still Muslim while there was a greater use of Hindu decorative features. The Muslim architectural features which dominate the Mughal buildings are the following: domes, the central one being larger than the rest; slender minarets or turrets at the corners (e.g., the *Taj Mahal*), magnificent halls supported by pillared, carved and painted arches; and the gateway shaped like a big arch, the actual entrance being a small rectangular opening under the arch (e.g., the *Buland Darwaza*). In some buildings of Akbar, e.g., the *Jahangiri Mahal*, the Hindu decorative style so dominates that the building itself is apt to be mistaken for a Hindu structure.

Early Buildings : Babur, Sher Shah, Akbar

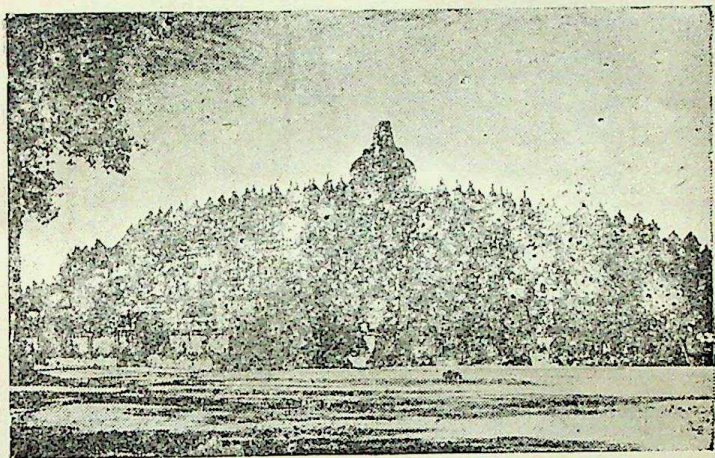
Babur (1526—30), who was not impressed with the Hindu buildings, except those at Gwalior, built a few mosques at Agra, Sikri and other places. Of the buildings of Sher Shah (1540—45) his tomb at Sasaram (Bihar) is the best. This solid building of impressive size is built in the middle of a lake on a high plinth. It has all the external

features of Muslim architecture while its interior, particularly the doorways, displayed many Hindu features. One of the early monuments of Akbar (1556—1605) is the tomb of Humayun. This beautiful building is believed to be the prototype of the *Taj Mahal* and some would prefer it to the latter. The tomb is built on an impressive basement of red sandstone, 22' high, lined with marble arches. It is a square, 156' side and 125' high, surmounted by a dome of great size, which has four small octagonal towers on its four sides. White marble is freely used all along the border to mark off the red sandstone. There are no minarets in the corners of the basement as in the case of the *Taj*. Fathpur Sikri (near Agra) was the headquarters of Akbar from 1569 to 1584 and the chief centre of his architectural activities. Built around the hermitage of Shaikh Salim Chishti it is a remarkable group of buildings, well planned and laid out. Though deserted and partly in ruins, the group "still forms an impressive revelation of a mighty personality," "a reflex of the mind of a great man." The city was originally hedged in by walls on three sides containing nine gateways and by a large artificial lake on the fourth side. The following are the most magnificent of Akbar's buildings at Fathpur Sikri: the palaces of Jodh Bai and Birbal, familiarly known as the queen's palaces, the *Diwani-i-Am* or the Emperor's office and the *Diwan-i-khas* or Hall of Private Audience, both of distinctly Hindu design, construction and ornament, and the great marble mosque called the *Jami Masjid* containing the famous *Buland Darwaza*. The *Jami Masjid* is a vast quadrangle 433' by 366' and served not only as a place of worship but a centre of learning containing a series of cloisters and cells for the accommodation of Muslim teachers and the disciples. The southern gateway of the mosque is the *Buland Darwaza*, a massive triumphal archway, built of marble and sandstone to commemorate Akbar's con-

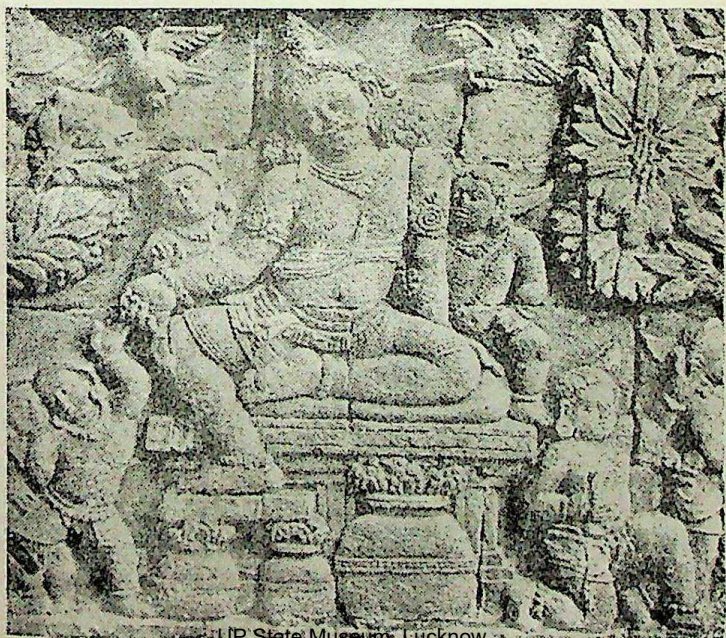
est of Gujerat. This gateway is 130' wide, 88' deep and 134' high. The depth is made up by a huge semi-dome sunk in the front wall. Beneath the arch there is a small rectangular opening, which is the actual entrance.

Of Akbar's buildings outside Fathpur Sikri the Palace of Forty Pillars at Allahabad, the emperor's tomb at Sikandara near Agra, and the *Jahangiri Mahal* in the Agra fort are noteworthy. The palace with its projecting verandah-roof supported on rows of pillars is definitely Hindu in design. Its construction is said to have taken forty years and engaged thousands of workmen. The tomb of the emperor at Sikandara rests on an enormous basement, which is 30' high and 320' square. The tomb itself, a 150' square rises in four diminishing stages, the topmost terrace being plain, not having the usual dome. The absence of the dome and the arch, the flat roof being supported by pillars, is singularly Indian and this is traced by Fergusson to the influence of the Buddhist *viharas*. In the *Jahangiri Mahal* the Hindu design predominates. Its square pillars and bracket capitals and rows of small arches erected in Hindu style make it appear like "the palace of a Hindu raja" rather than that of a Muslim king. Akbar also built a palace in Lahore and a fort in Agra. The latter was continued and extended by his successors. The Lahore palace contains a pillared verandah of Hindu design.

Just as Akbar adopted the Hindu style in many of his structures the Hindus, too, copied the Muslim style in their buildings, both religious and secular. The unfinished temple of Govinda-deva at Brindavan near Mathura (1590) is perhaps a good example of this fusion. Among the secular structures, which bear clear marks of Muslim influence, the Rajaput palaces of Amber, Bikaner and Jodhpur belonging to the seventeenth century are noteworthy.

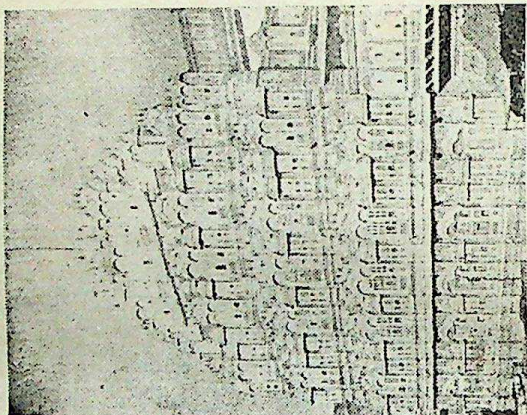


Borobudur Temple

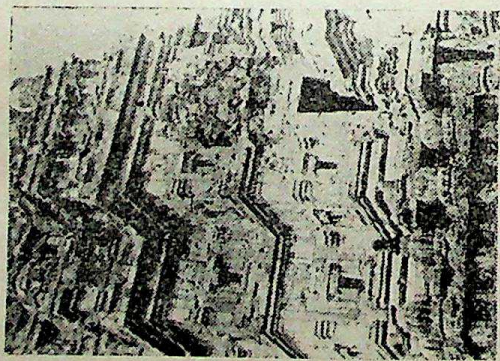


UP State Museum, Lucknow

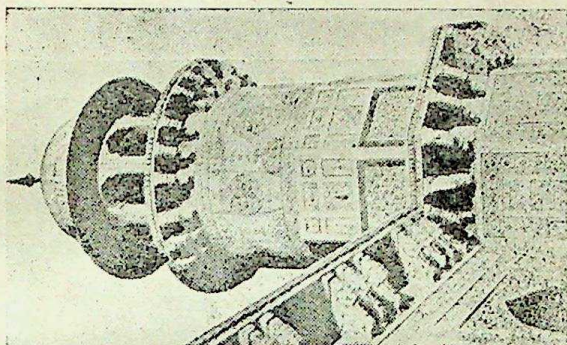
Sculpture at Borobudur Temple



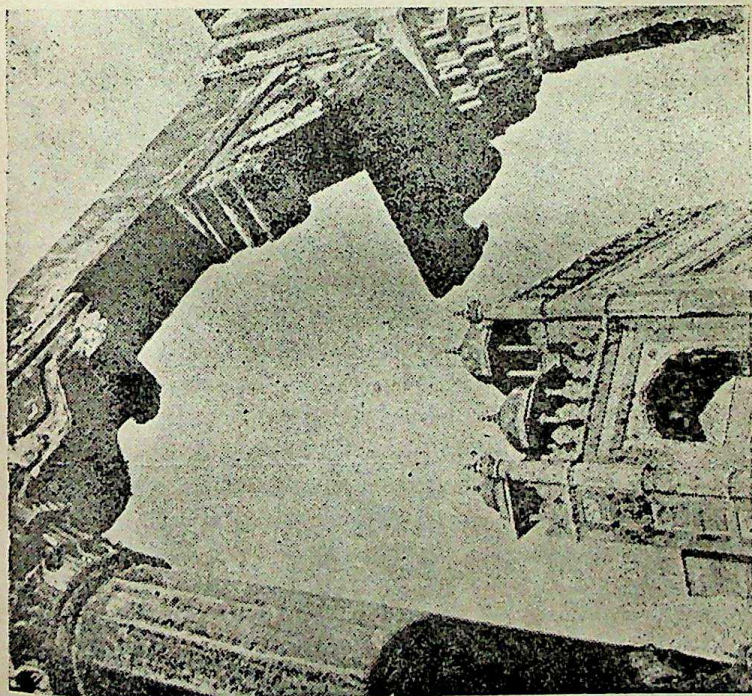
The •Hawa Mahal at Jaipur
(Hindu style)



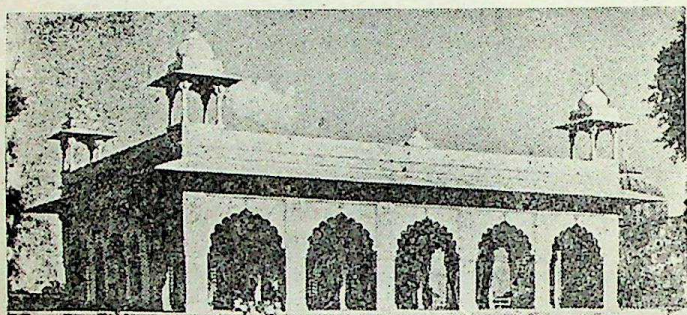
Prambanan Temple



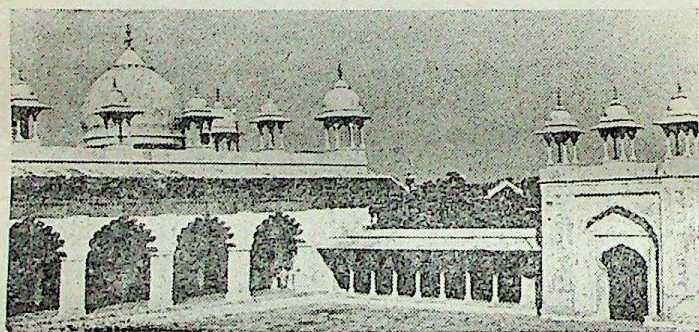
Itimad-ud-daula's tomb, Agra



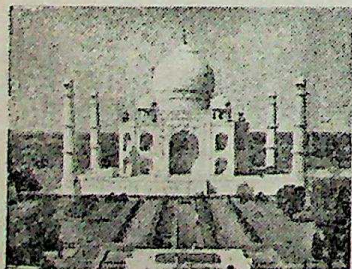
The Gate-way of Victory at Fatehpur—Sikri (Indo—Muslim Style)



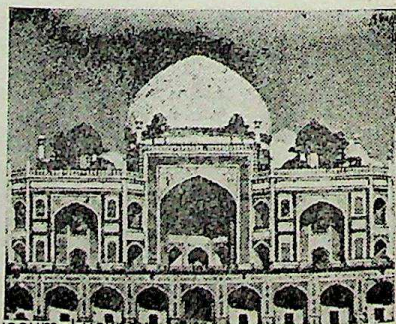
Divan-i-Khas, Delhi.



Moti Masjid, Agra.



The Taj Mahal.



UP State Museum, Lucknow

Humayun's tomb, Delhi.

Buildings of Jahangir

Jahangir revelled in laying out pleasure-gardens, which he called 'paradises.' Some of these were laid out in patterns like the Persian carpet. His gardens in Lahore, Udai-pur, Srinagar and Fathpur Sikri were famous. The *Moti Masjid* and his own tomb at Lahore and the tomb of Iti-mad-ud-Daula at Agra are the important buildings of Jahangir's reign. His tomb was surrounded by a beautiful garden called *Shah Dara* or Garden of Delight. The tomb of Iti-mad-ud-Daula (1621—28), built by Nur Jahan for her father is notable for two things. It is the first building of the Mughals built entirely of white marble and also the first in which the form of inlay decoration with semi-precious stones known as *pietra dura* was adopted.

Shah Jahan

The golden period of Mughal architecture

Shah Jahan was a prolific builder. He built forts, palaces, gardens, tombs and mosques in Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Kabul, Kandahar, Kashmir, Ajmer, Ahmadabad, etc. Though the precise expenditure on these buildings is not known the cost must have run into "several dozen crores of rupees." Shah Jahan discarded the red sand-stone altogether and used only marble, so that it is said "If Augustus found Rome of brick and left it of marble Shah Jahan found the Mughal cities of sand-stone and left them of marble." His buildings, though inferior in grandeur and originality to those of Akbar, are noted for their elegance, lavish display and skilful decoration. The architects, who planned and built like giants finished like jewellers. "With the extensive use of marble, the building art acquired a new sensibility under Shah Jahan. Instead of the rectangles of the previous period, the curved line and flowing rythm came into prominence, as the chisel of the stone cutter was replaced by

the finer instruments of the marble cutter and polisher." The most celebrated of his monuments is the *Taj Mahal* in Agra, the tomb in marble, which he erected over the grave of his queen Mumtaz Mahal. It took more than twenty years to build (1632-53) and cost six crores of rupees. It is undoubtedly the most magnificent example of Indo-Muslim art. Some western writers like Vincent Smith thought that it was "the product of a combination of European and Asiatic genius." It is a fact that there were European builders at the time in Delhi just as there were Persian and Hindu builders. There is also a contemporary statement by Father Manrique that models for the tomb were prepared and submitted to the emperor by Verroneo, a Venetian resident at Delhi. But indigenous sources, which give full information of those engaged in the construction of the *Taj*, do not make mention of any European designer or builder. As Nilakanta Sastri says, "The truth might well be that Verroneo like others produced designs, but that prepared by the Mughal master-builders was the one eventually selected." These sources point out to one Ustad Isa as the chief designer of the *Taj*. It is built on the model of Humayun's tomb, but the choice of dazzling white marble, the arresting contrast between the central dome and the slender minarets at the corners, and the excellent craftsmanship visible in every detail are its unique features. The tomb is built on a basement 22' high and 320' square. The tomb itself is a square of 186'. The central chamber housing the remains of the queen is lit through marble trellis work in the window openings and its walls are beautifully inlaid with coloured marble and precious stones in delicate patterns. The slender and tall minarets at the four corners of the basement give a touch of soaring grace to the entire structure. Surrounded by a garden containing rows of cypress trees and artificial lily-ponds on three sides and bound by the

Jumna on the fourth, the *Taj* is undoubtedly one of the most attractive buildings of the world and has evoked the admiration of travellers and critics alike.

Besides the *Taj Mahal* Shah Jahan built in Agra a palace including the audience halls (the *Diwani-i-Am* and the *Diwan-i-Khas*) and the *Moti Masjid*. White marble, adorned with coloured inlay, is the chief material employed in these structures. A mosque with coloured and glazed tiles at Lahore and beautiful marble pavilions on the banks of a lake in Ajmer are the other works of Shah Jahan. Between 1638 and 1658 Shah Jahan built the 'seventh city on Delhi,' called Shah-Jahanbad. The city with a fort and palace, surrounded by walls and pierced with gates, is in a well-preserved condition. The two chief buildings in the palace of Shah-Jahanbad are the *Diwani-i-Am* and the *Diwan-i-Khas*. The original ceiling of the latter made of silver inlaid with marble, gold and precious stones in colourful and attractive pattern, valued by the French traveller Tavernier at twenty-six million francs, bears the incscription in Persian meaning, "If on earth be an Eden of Bliss, it is this, it is this, it is this." The *Jami Masjid* which Shah Jahan built in Delhi between 1644 and 1658, is a grand structure of 325' square, set on a high platform with endless flight of steps and containing a number of lofty domes on its ceiling and two minarets on its sides. Marble is used in combination with red sandstone in this building.

Aurangzeb did not encourage art of any kind. He built two mosques, one at Delhi (*Moti Masjid*) and the other at Lahore (*Badshahi Masjid*), but both are inferior in design and decoration to any of the buildings of the previous reign. The fine marble-carvers lost their employment.

CHAPTER 11

THE IMPACT OF THE WEST ON INDIA

SECTION I

A better standard of government

From the Medieval to the Modern

It is true to say that British rule in India inaugurated the modern era in the history of Indian government. Before their rule standards of government in the Indian states were still medieval. The princely rule was autocratic, often oppressive and uncertain. Too much depended on the personal factor for the government to remain stable. Administrative institutions of a permanent character were first started by the East India Company on the model of similar institutions in England. As a result the rules of government and the public services became better known among the common people and humanitarian measures were undertaken by the Government in a well-understood spirit of responsibility and not paternalism. A code of administrative laws was built up for the first time consisting of Acts of Parliament (British) and the Acts passed by the Indian legislative councils both at the centre and in the states. These were no longer imperial *ukases* but elaborate measures to which anyone could appeal in a court of law.

Relief from famine and pestilence

As an example of the better standard of government established by the British in India may be mentioned the organized relief that was sought to be provided against famine and plague. Famines which broke out intermittently due to failure of monsoons were accentuated in the 18th and 19th centuries by difficulties of transport, growth of population and unemployment caused by the decline of

cottage industries. In the century between 1770 and 1878 famines broke out on five occasions. In the famine of 1866—67, which affected Orissa and the east coast upto Madras, about two million people died. The great famine of 1876—78 affected the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh), Bombay, Haiderabad, Madras and Mysore. *Ad hoc* measures were at first taken by the British, like the Delhi Sultans and the Mughals before them, but they soon found that they turned out to be costly and fruitless and that definite principles and well thought out methods were necessary if success were to be achieved. Famine commissions were set up in 1880 and 1900 and famine codes were drawn up. The latter contained provisions for famine relief, *e.g.*, provision of work for the able-bodied, distribution of food or cash to the aged and the infirm, remission of land revenue, offer of *takavi* loans and advance preparation of relief works so that operations might begin without delay. Famines were sometimes accompanied by cholera and malaria. But plague was a scourge which visited localised areas irrespective of famine conditions. It broke out in a violent form in the Bombay-Poona area during 1896-97 and the government took several measures like mass isolation, etc., but unfortunately these were taken in complete ignorance of the real nature of the epidemic and hence there was considerable opposition to them from the people, which was voiced by B. G. Tilak and others.

Irrigation and forests

To meet the enormous expenditure involved in carrying out irrigation projects the British government began the policy of financing them by public loans (1866). The new policy enabled the government to undertake and finish the Agra Canal (1874), the Lower Ganges Canal (1878) and the Sirhind Canal (1882). The last canal had a total length of

INDIAN CULTURE

3,700 miles. The Punjab canals, which irrigated the area lying between the Indus rivers, were excavated between 1890 and 1900. The most important of these canals was the Lower Chenab Canal having a total length of 2,700 miles. It irrigated the region between the Chenab and the Ravi. Practically a desert region before the project was undertaken it became a land of flourishing "canal colonies". Following the example of the centre the states too began to plan their own irrigation projects.

While the Muslim and Hindu kings of old undertook many important irrigation projects out of state revenues they did not pursue any definite forest policy. The British in India, on the other hand, laid down a scientific forest policy taking their lessons from the progress made in the science of forestry in Germany and France. In 1864 they appointed a German expert as Inspector-General of Forests and in the next year passed an Act for the preservation and efficient management of the forests in India. In 1878 a Forest School was opened at Dehra Dun.

Railways : Factory legislation

The first railway lines in India were laid during 1853-56 by Governor-General Dalhousie (1848—56). They connected Bombay with Thana, Calcutta with Ranigunj and Madras with Arkonam. They were at first entrusted to private companies under the "Guarantee System," by which the government gave them a guarantee that if their net profits fell below 5% the difference would be paid from state funds. If the profits exceeded 5% government was to get one half of the excess. The railways were a liability upto 1900. After that date the income began to rise and the government itself began to construct and manage new railway lines. The Railway Board was set up in 1905. Besides being a source of income the railways provided easy transport con-

ditions, encouraged trade and industry and by breaking distance and separation helped progress towards unity and nationalism.

The British Government of India passed Factory Laws to ensure proper labour conditions in the mills and factories that were being established in North India in the second half of the 19th century. The Acts of 1881 and 1891 limited the hours of work of women and children and authorised the state governments to make rules to ensure supply of good drinking water, proper ventilation and clean and sanitary conditions in the factories.

SECTION II

Religion, Society and Culture

European influence on the Indian aristocracy

Indian princes and nobles freely demanded the services of European surgeons, surveyors and artists. The doctors attached to the Residencies of the various native states gave medical and surgical treatment to those who asked for them. Two English artists started a school of drawing and painting at Poona during the closing year of the 19th century. Malet, Resident at Poona from 1786 to 1797 presented to Peshwa Madhava Rao II European curiosities like glassware, clocks, watches, telescopes etc. The Peshwa received lessons in Astronomy and Geography from Findley. Raghunath Hari Navalkar, the Raja of Jhansi, built a library of English books and a laboratory for conducting scientific experiments. Raja Sarfoji of Tanjore studied under the Danish missionary Schwartz and possessed the ability to write English with facility. He made a valuable collection of books, paintings and oriental manuscripts in the famous Saraswathi Mahal Library.

Attitude of the middle class Indians

While the Indian aristocracy was not averse to meeting Englishmen and having social intercourse with them the common people regarded Englishman with prejudice and hatred. To the fact that he was the foreign conqueror and ruler were added racial prejudice and ignorance. All Europeans were regarded as winebibbers. According to Manucci, Akbar is said to have exclaimed that the Europeans and spirits must have been created at the same time. "Abbe Dubois records two revealing incidents from the time: an Indian once remarked to a chaplain: 'Christian religion! Devil religion: Christain much drink, much do wrong, much beat, much abuse others.' Again, when Schwartz told a young Hindu dancing girl that no wicked and unholy person could possibly enter the Kingdom of Heaven, she promptly retorted saying: 'Alas, sir, in that case hardiy any European will ever enter it.'"

Attitude of the Englishman towards Indians and Indian life

The English factors at first moved with the Indians freely and on an equal footing. They did not have a deep-rooted colour prejudice. Due to paucity of European women in India marriage with natives and half-castes was common. They displayed a keen interest and enthusiasm in Indian entertainments, liked *nautches* and elephant fights and used *hookahs* for smoking. But as the company's power increased the Englishmen began to assume an air of superiority. They regarded Muslims as profligate and Hindus as superstitious. More European women came to live in India and marriage with coloureds was no longer a necessity. The refusal of Cornwallis to entrust Indians with high offices widened the gulf between Indians and Euro-

* K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *History of India*, III, Pp. 207-8.

peans and resulted in the social segregation of the latter. They formed their own clubs and lived in their own settlements. They did not know the Indian languages and did not care to acquaint themselves with Indian life. Their contacts were limited to *dubashes* or interpreters, slaves and servants or high Mughal officers. Ananda Ranga Pillai, Dupleix's agent and *dubash*, who has left interesting and full accounts of the political and social conditions of the day in his Diary, could "invite Dupleix to a grand dinner with salutes of twenty-one guns between each course, and the Councillors to wedding feasts; but it was a privilege for him to be permitted to talk with a Councillor's wife, and of the ordinary give-and-take of social intercourse there was little or none."

**Raja Ram Mohan Rai,
the Prophet of New India**

Ram Mohan, 1772-1833, was born in an orthodox Kulin family of Bengalee Brahmins. He developed an aversion to *Sati* after witnessing the immolation of his brother's widow. He studied Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit, and learnt English only after he entered the Company's service in 1804. The opposition to *sati* made him critical of several aspects of Hinduism. He attacked the Hindu belief in many gods and their worship with idols and elaborate ritual. He tried to show that the Hindu *shastras* themselves preached the oneness and unity of god. The multiplicity of gods and their ritualistic worship was, he declared, the result of growing superstition of a later age. Controversies followed and Ram Mohan "like Luther going back to the Bible from the corruptions of medieval Christianity" published Bengali translations of the Vedas and the Upanishads to defend his thesis and issued several Bengali tracts. His rationalism led him to question the miracles of Christ in his *Precepts of Jesus* (1820) while accepting his moral teaching.

Ram Mohan Rai was one of those who ardently supported the introduction of English education. Along with David Hare he was mainly instrumental in founding the Hindu College, Calcutta, which became the parent of Presidency College. He directed his reforming zeal against the social abuses of the Hindus like *sati* and polygamy and forcibly advocated remarriage of widows under specific circumstances, female education and a share to daughters of the father's property. He also attacked the rigorous caste rules. He worked in several fields ; he championed the cause of the freedom of the press and the rights of the peasants in the zamindari areas and advocated codification of laws, separation of judicial from executive functions, trial by jury and Indianisation of the army services. He was undoubtedly the first great Prophet of New India.

The Mughal emperor Akbar, son and successor of Shah Alam II, appealed to the Governor-General, Bentinck, for an increase of his pension. When it was refused he sent Ram Mohan Rai to the British king to lay his case before him and conferred upon the Rai the title of Raja. The mission was opposed by the Governor-General and Ram Mohan promised him that he would make no public appearance as Mughal envoy. The Raja presented his memorial to the Board of Control and asked for an increase of eighteen lakhs in the emperor's pension. The Board agreed to an increase of three lakhs only, which was accepted by the emperor. When his task was over and before he could return home the Raja died at Bristol (1833).

Effects of English education on Hindu religion and society

The introduction of English education in India in 1835 can easily be regarded as the most important event in the history of modern India, the effect of which the pre-

sent generations are still feeling. The middle classes took to English education in the hope of securing high offices in the Company's services and gradually there appeared an enlightened class which loved western education for its contents rather than the job which it could secure. The new education produced new ideas and helped Indians to make a re-appraisal of their traditional values. It administered a general shake-up to Indian society and gave it powerful urge to shed its superstition and rigidity of thought and assimilate the new critical and creative thought based on reason and judgment and science and experiment and acquire a zeal for reform. Under the influence of British liberalism and radicalism the intelligentsia of India imbibed the first ideas of nationalism.

*Rationalist Extremism, Conservative
Orthodoxy and Enlightened Modernism*

In introducing English education the Company did not have as its object any attempt to discourage or challenge the traditional education. On the other hand it established schools for the study of Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy and for the the propagation of Muslim learning. There were many individual Englishmen who loved Hindu philosophy, learned Sanskrit and lived like Hindus. General Charles Stuart (1777-1828), who was known as "Hindu Stuart," filled his house with Hindu sculptures and provided for adorning his tomb with Hindu carvings. English translations of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* were brought out by Wilkins and Jones respectively. But the reactions of the new education on the Indian youth were complex and diverse. For a time it threatened to create an educated class sworn to atheism and iconoclasm. The students of the Calcutta Hindu College indulged for a time, under the misguided enthusiasm of certain teachers and leaders, in a

reckless campaign against everything Hindu. Hinduism was held to be responsible for India's degradation. They exhibited their opposition to Hindu traditions and beliefs by excessive drinking, meat eating and shouting in the streets "We have eaten Muslim bread," throwing beef-bones into the houses of the orthodox and becoming Christians. But the number of such extremists was very small. The bulk of the people were conservative and looked with suspicion at the new education and its advocacy of western civilization. The more orthodox sections formed associations, the most prominent of which was the "*Dharma Sabha*," to oppose reformist legislation by appealing to law courts. They contended that laws like the *anti-sati* law, the Act for the Remarriage of Widows and the Act raising the Age of Consent for marriage threatened to break up Hindu society and destroy Hindu religion. Between the two extremes there appeared a class of enlightened Hindus, small but influential, who advocated a reform of Hinduism from within and building up a new society based on the best and true in the old and the new. The members of this school were the true followers of Raja Ram Mohan Rai.

Devendranath Tagore, 1845

The Brahma Samaj

In 1828 Ram Mohan Rai had founded an association of Hindus with reformist ideas called the Brahma Sabha. The chief object of the Sabha was to create a casteless society based on common worship. For that purpose he established a temple dedicated to Brahman with no image in it and no worship. It was to be used as a meeting place of people belonging to different sects and castes. The departure of Ram Mohan to England and his subsequent death there practically led to the decline and disappearance of the Brahma Sabha. It was revived by Devendranath Tagore

(father of Ravindranath Tagore) in 1845 under the name of Brahma Samaj. By introducing a covenant, to be executed by each member, and a ceremony of initiation he converted a somewhat loose organization into a church. To propagate the ideas of the Samaj Devendranath Tagore started a journal, the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, and appointed many preachers.

Keshab Chandra Sen

Split in the Brahma Samaj

Gradually there appeared in the Brahma Samaj a radical group or young members under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen, who joined the Samaj in 1857. Devendranath at first encouraged Keshab Chandra and appointed him Secretary of the Samaj as he was an eloquent and passionate preacher, who emphasised repentance and prayer and roused a strong devotional fervour among the members. "A new missionary zeal characterised the followers of Keshab, some of whom gave up their secular affairs and devoted their whole time to the preaching of the new gospel all over Bengal." As a result of his efforts the number of branches of the Samaj increased to fifty-four. But soon Sen and his followers began to celebrate inter-caste marriages and widow-remarriages and insisted on Brahmin preachers of the Samaj discarding their sacred threads. Devendranath Tagore refused to countenance any serious departure from established social practice and he dismissed Keshab Chandra Sen and his followers from the Samaj, whereupon the latter began to form his own organisation with several branches (1865).

The Prarthana Samaj

The Maharashtrian counterpart of the Brahma Samaj was the Prarthana Samaj. It was founded in 1867 under

the inspiration of Keshab Chandra Sen. The followers and members of the Maharashtrian movement, unlike the Brahma Samajists, accepted the Hindu Gods and image worship, and concentrated on social reform. They were devoted followers of the traditions of the great Mahratta saints like Namadeva, Tukaram and Ramdas and they emphasised *bhakti* through *bhajan*. At the same time they advocated intercaste dining and marriages, widow-remarriage and the uplift of women and the depressed classes. The Samaj had such distinguished members as Justice Ranade and Gopala Krishna Gokhale. Under their guidance a Foundling Asylum and Orphanage, a Widows' Home, a Depressed Classes Mission and other such institutions were founded. Justice Ranade devoted his whole life to the cause of the Samaj. He advocated a simultaneous progress of Hindu society in the social, religious, economic and political fields and held that social reform alone was not enough. The Deccan Education Society was established in 1884 under his inspiration. The members of the society undertook to serve on a nominal salary and thus it was possible to start without large endowments the Fergusson College at Poona and the Willingdon College at Sangli.

Dayananda Saraswati and the Arya Samaj

While the Brahma Samaj drew its inspiration from western education and rationalism the Arya Samaj opposed all foreign influences and advocated a return to the Vedas. It was a sharp reaction against too much dependence on and appreciation of everything western. Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-83), a *Sannyasin* who founded the Arya Samaj in 1875, gave to the Hindus the slogan "Go back to the Vedas". The Swami had no English education himself but he declared that every modern scientific achievement or idea was already contained in the Vedas. He discarded the

later scriptures like the *puranas* as useless. From the Vedas he drew his inspiration, like Raja Ram Mohan Rai, for advocating reforms like abolition of image-worship and adoption of monotheism, abolition of caste restrictions and child marriage, encouragement of female education, equality of the sexes and widow-remarriage. He wrote out his views in his book *Satyartha Prakas* and preached directly to the masses, while the Brahma Samajists appealed mostly to the intelligentsia. The Arya Samaj grew in numbers, became very strong in the Punjab and the U. P., where it practically displaced the Brahma Samaj. After his death the work of Swami Dayananda was carried on by such distinguished persons as Lala Hansraj, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Guru Dutt and Swami Shraddhananda.

The Ramakrishna Mission

The most potent agency of modern Hindu renaissance is perhaps the Ramakrishna Mission, known after Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1833-86), an obscure and poor priest of a Kali temple at Dakshinesvar, near Calcutta. He had no education, eastern or western, worth the name but led an intensely spiritual life. He held that image worship might serve as an excellent means of attaining the highest spirituality but warned that ritualistic worship must not be made an end in itself. He also held that different religions were different paths leading to the same goal. The same god, he declared, is being worshipped under different names, Krishna, Christ, Allah, etc. His mysticism and catholicism attracted stray visitors from Calcutta to whom he expressed his views in pithy sayings full of meaning. The most famous of his disciples and one who made him world famous was a young graduate of the Calcutta University, Narendranath Dutta, afterwards Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). He carried the message of his *Guru* all over India,

collected together and published his teachings and founded the Ramakrishna Mission. By his learning, spiritual fervour and wonderful personality he commanded an influential following which included princes and peasants. After considerable difficulties he attended the international "Parliament of Religions" at Chicago (1893) and made his mark by an eloquent exposition of Hinduism as understood by his master. From that day the teachings of Ramakrishna began to spread all over the world. Branches of the Ramakrishna Mission came to be established in different parts of India and the U. S. A. The Mission, unlike the Brahma Samaj or the Arya Samaj, does not denote a religious sect. It is a monastic order spreading reformist ideas among the people and doing social work by starting educational institutions and serving the unfortunate victims of flood or famine. India's prestige rose high as a result of the work of the missions in foreign countries. A temple and mutt in memory of Ramakrishna has been erected at Dakshinesvar (the Belur Math).

The Theosophical Society

Another institution which played an important part in the movement of Hindu Renaissance was the Theosophical Society. The Society was originally founded in the United States in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott. They came to India and established their headquarters at Adyar (1886). The Society owed its real success to Mrs. Annie Besant, an Irish woman, who joined the Society in 1889 and settled in India in 1893. She held that the Indian problem could be solved by reviving her ancient ideals and institutions. She started the Central Hindu College at Benares, which developed into the Benares Hindu University (1915). The membership of the Theosophical Society was always small ; its object was not to appeal to the masses but to

the *elite* of society. Even the *elite*, in course of time, kept away from it as they did not like its mysterious "inner ring" and "occult mysticism."

**Individuals who restated Hindu philosophy
in the light of modern forces :**
Tagore, Gandhi and others

Besides Justice Ranade two other leaders of Maharashtra exercised a great influence on the Hindu revivalist movement. Gopala Krishna Gokhale actively supported the work of the Prarthana Samaj. Bal Gangadhar Tilak's interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita* helped the conversion of modern Hinduism into an ethical religion with a liberal and social outlook. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the famous Bengali poet, wrote extensively. He emphasised a rationalist, humanitarian and world outlook and wanted the Indian youth to learn what was best in the eastern and western cultures. His *Gitanjali* and the international university which he started at Shantiniketan are well-known. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), while he was accepted as the unquestioned political leader during the struggle for independence, showed what was best in Hinduism and evolved new values out of old ideas. He owed precious little to western civilization except perhaps the English language. "His emphasis on human solidarity and brotherhood, his sympathy with the poor and 'outcastes', his asceticism and passion for the simple life, his stress on a positive experience of God and a life of service and sacrifice, his message of Truth, Love and *Ahimsa*, and his insistence by example and precept on the efficacy of vicarious suffering were all derived from Hindu precedents, though their integration into a social and political gospel of dynamic power was indeed his personal contribution, unique and unsurpassed in its potency. His life's work.....went far to

help India to discover her true self." (K. A. Nilakanta Sastri.) Ramana Maharishi and Aurobindo Ghose were two other individuals who interpreted India's religion and philosophy in the light of the modern social and political forces.

Social changes

Family, caste, village

The basic institutions of the Hindu family, caste and village were not fundamentally affected by western influence but they too went through a process of change. Due to the rise of new economic forces and a spirit of individualism the joint family system gradually disappeared. Early marriages of girls was very common until 1929 when the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed fixing the lowest age of marriage at 14 for girls and 18 for boys. This Act popularly known as the Sarda Act after Rai Saheb Harbilas Sarada, who sponsored the bill, was criticised by the orthodox sections. The Servants of India Society founded by Gokhale in 1905 at Poona had the gradual abolition of all distinctions of caste and creed as one of its objects. The members took a vow to regard all Indians as brothers and work for their advancement. Under the influence of the new ideas caste rules are not strictly being observed. Inter-dining and marriages amidst sub-castes have become common. Untouchability has been banned by the new constitution. The link between caste and profession has almost disappeared. Sea voyage no longer entails excommunication. Villages are no longer isolated as they were, thanks to the railway and the motor bus, while the cinema and the radio have radically altered their views of life and the world at large. Inequalities and social complexes are breaking down.

Women's education : Welfare of widows

Traditional Hindu opinion frowned upon female education and there was a belief in Bengal that an educated girl would become a widow on marriage. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, a member of the Brahma Samaj, took an active interest in the education of girls. Between 1855 and 1858 he established nearly forty girls' schools. A widows' home was established in 1877 by Sasipada Banerji for training young widows in domestic science and cottage industries. A more famous widows' home was established at Poona by Pandita Ramabai (1858—1922) with a strength of 2,000. She was a Brahmin lady who turned Christian in her later life. She was well versed in Sanskrit and her widows' home became a seat of Sanskrit learning as well. Professor Karve of Poona started a widows' home in 1889, which developed into the Indian Women's University under his inspiring guidance. The university adopted the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and had a scheme of subjects specially suited to the needs of women. The Lady Irwin College was started at Delhi in 1926 by the All-India Women's Conference with the object of training women teachers and establishing a course of studies suitable to women and in conformity with Indian traditions and ideals.

History, art, architecture

The reconstruction of India's history is largely the work of European scholars and belongs to the period between 1837 and 1922. In the former year James Prinsep deciphered the ancient Brahmi script and began reading the Asokan edicts and in the later year was discovered the advanced urban culture of ancient Indus valley. The men who helped this reconstruction were mostly British officials.*

*See Chap, I Sec. 'The Discovery of Ancient India,'

The British contribution to art, however, is a disappointing chapter in the history of India. They built roads, canals, railways and bridges but did not construct anything artistic like the Muslim or Hindu rulers. Under the influence of Macaulay they had developed a positive dislike for everything Indian and Bentinck "seriously considered the demolition of the Taj Mahal and the sale of its marble, and was only diverted because the test auction of materials from the Agra Palace proved unsatisfactory." The Indian stone masons and master builders still found employment in the native states, under rich merchants and in the temple towns like Brindavan and Puri. An interest in the ancient monuments of India was evinced by Curzon, who passed the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1904). As for painting, a pseudo-European style at first tended to become the fashion but soon the Indian style won the pride of place. The Calcutta school represented by Abanindranath Tagore, his brother Gaganendranath and their pupils like Asit Kumar and Nanda Lal Bose closely followed the Ajanta style.

The Press

The English Press

The earliest newspapers were English concerns and were chiefly meant for the English business community.* They indulged in flippant articles and news and bitter criticism of the government. Hickey's *Bengal Gazette* begun in 1780 was suppressed in 1782 and its editor imprisoned for a long term for libel. The number of newspapers grew after 1790. Wellesley, who had no liking for the "tribe of editors," insisted on all editors declaring their name and address to government and getting its approval for every

* The printing press was first introduced into India by the Christian missionaries in the sixteenth century.

item of publication. This rigorous censorship was relaxed by Lord Hastings. Adam, who held the office of Governor-General for seven months between the departure of Hastings and the arrival of Amherst, took a different view and imposed a system of licensing newspapers. In August 1823 he expelled James Silk Buckingham, editor of the *Calcutta Journal* (founded 1818), to Britain for the libels which he regularly published.

The Indian Press

The first Indian newspaper in English, which was started by Gangadhar Bhattacharya, was also called the *Bengal Gazette*, but it did not live for more than a year. The first Bengali paper was a monthly called *Digdarsan* started in 1818 by J. C. Marshman, a Serampore missionary. The same year it was changed into a weekly called the *Samachar Darpan* (Mirror of News). Its criticism of Hinduism evoked a Hindu rival *Timira Nasana* (Dispeller of Darkness), which was only short-lived. Ram Mohan Rai started the *Samad Kaumudi*, a weekly, in 1821, in which he advocated the abolition of *Sati*. The orthodox sections started a rival newspaper the *Samachar Chandrika*, to support *Sati* and oppose Bentinck's policy. The latter became popular and Rai's weekly had to close down. He then founded the Persian *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* (Mirror of News 1822) and other papers. In 1823 Rai and a few others sent a memorial to the Supreme Court against a rigorous Press Ordinance issued in that year. The Christian missionaries were in the habit of issuing pamphlets and writing in the papers criticising the Hindu religion and practices and saying that the Christian religion was superior. Against their activities the Indian newspapers kept up a steady fire.

Literature ***Bengali**

Indian languages acquired a new vitality and variety at the touch of the new influences. The most remarkable development was seen in prose writing, Sanskrit-laden terse poetry on conventional subjects, which was usually considered as literature, yielded place to a simple unadorned prose style, which could freely be used to express any idea. The verse form itself was affected by the development of prose and became more simplified. The novel, essay, drama, short story and feature-article came to be adopted everywhere and, of course, Bengal led the other provinces in this respect and Bengali works served as a model for efforts in other languages. Ram Mohan Rai adopted an unadorned prose style for his philosophical works and pamphlets on social reform. He was also a forceful journalist in English, Bengali and Persian. Isvara Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Debendranath Tagore, Akshaya Kumar Datta and Ramesh Chandra Dutt were other great Bengali prose writers of the nineteenth century. Rabindranath Tagore occupies the pride of place in the twentieth century both in prose and poetry. The first plays staged were on social subjects like the *Vidava Vivaha* (1856) of Umesh Chandra Mitra. *Krishna Kumari* (1861) was a well-known drama, based on Rajaput annals, by Michael Madhusudan Datta. Bankim Chandra was the most forceful fiction writer in Bengali. His first novel *Durgesa Nandini* (1865) was a historical fiction modelled on *Ivanhoe*. *Kapalakundala* (1866) and *Mrinalini* (1869) were other historical romances. *Anandamath* (1881), which contains the song *Vande Mataram*, is placed in the unsettled period of the passing away of Muslim rule and the establishment of British rule. *Indira* was

*K. A. Nilakāṇa Sastri. *History of India III*, pp. 378-402.
UP State Museum, Lucknow

Bankim's best known social novel. All his novels deal with the pressing social and political problems of the day. *Svarnalata* (1874) by Taraknath Ganguli was "the first really domestic novel which portrayed in simple style the economic condition of the lower middle class."

The Tagores were a unique literary family of Bengal. Dwaraknath Tagore, the grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore, was one of the first Bengalis to sail abroad. He died in England. His son Debendranath Tagore, called Maharishi, was a patron of poets and artists. He was the founder of the Brahma Samaj. His eldest son Dwijendranath was the author of a work on the *Gita* and an allegory called *Svapna Prayan* (1875). The next son Satyendranath (1842-1923) was the first Indian I.C.S., who wrote a work on Buddhism. Jyotindranath (1848-1925) was a musician and artist. He translated some well-known Sanskrit dramas and French short stories into Bengali. Svarnakumari Devi, a daughter, was the authoress of poems, plays and stories. She also edited the magazine called the *Bharati*. Rabindranath (1861-1941) was the youngest member of this distinguished family. The English rendering of his *Gitanjali*, published by the India Society of London in 1912 got for him the Noble Prize (1913). The keynote of his writings was optimism and joy in the face of suffering. He loved art, song, dance and the natural surroundings of a village. He wrote extensively, his compositions including short and long stories, novels, sonnets, songs, nursery rhymes, plays, essays, etc.

Hindi

The Hindi with some admixture of Urdu called *Khari-boli*, spoken in the vicinity of Meerut, was adopted as the medium of prose in the eighteenth century. William Carey, Professor of Indian Languages in the Fort

William College, adopted it for his translations of Christian religious writings. Dayananda Saraswati's *Satyartha Prakas* was one of the earliest books in forceful Hindi. The first Hindi newspaper, the *Benares Akhbar* appeared in 1845. Bharatendu Harischandra of Benares was a versatile writer, who wrote more than 175 works during his short life of thirty-five years (1850-85). The modern age of Hindi is said to begin with him. He brought out the *Kavi Vachan Sudha* (1868), a collection of poems in Brajabhasha. Besides poetry he wrote plays and essays. The work of collection and publication of old manuscripts and the encouragement of new literary effort was undertaken by the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Benares (1893) and the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (1910). The former issued a monthly magazine called the *Saraswati* edited by Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. The early works of the twentieth century were inspired by the nationalist movement. The *Bharat Bharati* of Maithili Saran Gupta was a collection of patriotic poems recalling India's past glory. Premchand is the great Hindi novelist, *Sevasadan*, *Premasram*, *Karmabhumi* and *Godan* being among his well known novels. Brindavanlal Varma made a great name as a historical novelist. Sumitranandan Pant "brought the sweetness of the Brajabhasha to Khari-boli with great novelty in poetic imagery." The *Misrabandhu Vinod* (1911) by Syam Bihari Misra and Sukhadev Bihari Misra was the first systematic history of Hindi literature.

Urdu

Prose writing in Urdu (called Hindustani by the English) developed first in the Fort William College at Calcutta. Dr. John Gilchrist, its Principal, wrote a Urdu grammar and dictionary and drew around himself a number of Urdu scholars from the United Provinces and the Central Provin-

ces. Ghalib of Delhi, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Nazir Ahmad and Maulvi Abdul Halim were among the noted prose writers of the modern period. Most of their works were translations from Persian and other languages. The Punjab, in due course, became the seat of modern Urdu. Maulvi Muhammad Husain lived in Lahore and wrote the *Darbar-i-Akbari* describing the courtiers of Akbar. He simplified Urdu poetry by removing its unnatural rhyming system and by writing on natural and human subjects. His *Abi-Hayat* is a history of Urdu literature. Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938), who coined the word 'Pakistan', was the centre of the Punjab literary movement. Though he had his education in England and Germany he condemned European civilization as "fraudulent, chaotic, unjust and greedy." He gave expression to the feeling in his poems, both Urdu and Persian.

Punjabi, Marathi and Gujarati

Both Punjabi and Marathi prose of the modern times began under western influence. The Bible of 1815 was one of the first prose works in Punjabi. William Carey produced a grammar of Punjabi (1812) and the Ludhiana Mission a Punjabi dictionary (1854). The first Marathi prose works were school books and translations from the Bible. The Gospel of St. Matthew was published in 1805 and Carey's Marathi grammar in 1815. Writings by westerners at once produced a reaction and works on traditional themes derived from Sanskrit works began to appear almost simultaneously both in Punjabi and Marathi. Kalidas (Pandit Man Singh, 1865-1944) was one of the famous Punjabi writers of the modern age. He was a poet and a story writer. His *Ramayana* is held in as much respect as that of Tulasi Das in the U.P. Charan Singh (1891-1935) was an editor of several journals and author of historical novels. Nanak Singh championed the cause of the poor in his *Jivan Sangram* and

other works. Marathi passed more under western influence than any other Indian language. Reformism was preached through the new forms of novel, drama and essay. Chip-lunkar led a reaction against the western influences. B. G. Tilak continued this tradition in his English weekly *Maratha* and later a Marathi weekly *Kesari*. Among the well-known poets, novelists and dramatists of the twentieth century mention must be made of Varerkar (Mama), P. K. Atre, Keshavsuta "the father of modern Marathi poetry", M. T. Patwardhan and N. C. Kelkar. V. K. Rajwade and G. S. Sardesai are well-known research workers in Maharashtra history."

Narmadasankar Lalsankar (1833-86) is regarded as the father of modern Gujarati. He wrote poems, essays and mythological works and also produced dictionaries. His *Dharma Vichara* (1885) contained a plea for the study of Aryan culture. His successors wrote plays and novels based on the works of Moliere and Scott. M. S. Tripathi (1840-1907) began the movement of enriching Gujarati by a large admixture of Sanskrit words while the Parsis developed a new Parsi Gujarati style with a free mixture of English words. Among the modern Gujarati poets, essayists, novelists and journalists the names of the following have become famous: Narasimha Rao, Ramanbhai, Nilkanth, B. K. Thakore, A. B. Dhruva and K. M. Munshi. Mahatma Gandhi's *Autobiography*, though not a scholarly work, is noted for its unsurpassed "simplicity, directness and prophetic fervour."

The South Indian languages

School books by Christian authors and translations and adaptations of western works marked, as elsewhere, the beginnings of prose writing in Tamil. Shakespeare's plays inspired the early Tamil dramatists. An adaptation of *Mer-*

chant of Venice was made in 1872. The *Manonmaniyam* of Sundaram Pillai was modelled on Shakespeare. But traditional themes easily dominated. Minakshisundaram Pillai composed the *Sthala puranas*. The first biography in Tamil literature was the life-story of this author composed by Dr. V. Swaminatha Aiyar (Mahamahopadhyaya) published in 1933-34. The biography gives a pen-picture of the state of Tamil studies in the nineteenth century. The *Nandan Charitram* was the first verse drama (opera) in Tamil. Several plays meant for the popular stage were also written in this period, e.g., *Sakuntala Natakam* and *Bharata Vilasam* by Ramachandra Kavirayar, the *Arichandira Natakam* by Ranga Pillai, the *Savittiri Natakam* by Govindaswami Rao of Tanjore, the *Dambachari Vilasam* of Visvanatha Mudaliyar, etc. These plays were mere imitations of western models. In his *Rupavati* and *Kalavati* Suryanarayana Sastri tried to combine the features of the western drama and those of the ancient Sanskrit drama. Sambandam Mudaliar wrote, staged and acted in a number of plays, mostly comedies and farces, during the turn of the century. The Tamil translation of the Marathi *Panchatantra* by Tandavaraya Mudaliyar (1826) was one of the earliest Tamil prose works. *Pratapamudaliyar Charitram* by Vedanayakam Pillai and *Kamalambal Charitram* by Rajam Aiyar were the earliest and well-known novels. Essays on difficult subjects were written by Chelvakesavaraya Mudaliyar, Kalyanasundara Mudaliyar and others. Patriotic Tamil poetry and song was the *forte* of Subramanya Bharati who died in 1922 at the age of 38. He is regarded as one of the leaders of the national revolt in the south. His poems include traditional and puranic themes as well. Desikavinayakam Pillai was a versatile poet, who wrote extensively on social and political themes.

The first modern literary efforts in Telugu were those of

C. P. Brown, a member of the Madras Civil Service (1817-55), who collected and edited the Telugu classics, wrote an essay on the growth of Telugu literature and compiled a Telugu dictionary. Viresalingam Pantulu, a Brahma Samajist and ardent social reformer, wrote the first novel in Telugu—*Rajasekhara Charita* modelled on Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*. He wrote a regular history of literature consisting of lives of poets (*Andhra Kavula Charitra*), essays and dramas. The blind bard Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham was the author of several historical novels based on the Rajaput annals. His stories contain simple and attractive pictures of Telugu life. Literary criticism of a high order was initiated by C. Ramalinga Reddi in his *Kavitattva-vicharamu* (1899). Short poems with a new metre and new ideas were popularised by several poets. Gurjada Appa Rao, Gidugu Ramamurthi and Rayaprolu Subba Rao were pioneers in this line. Among the dramas on traditional and historical themes the following are well-known: Kolachalam Srinivasa Rao's *Rama Raju* or *Fall of Vijayanagar*, Gurjada Appa Rao's *Kanyasulkam*, Vedam Venkatraya Sastri's *Uttara-Ramacharitam* and *Prataparudriyam*, the latter dealing with the capture of Prataparudra by the Tughlak generals, and Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham's *Prasanna-Yadavam* and *Prachanda-Yadavam*.

Kannada continued on traditional lines under the patronage of the Mysore court. Krishnaraja Odeyar, in whose reign Mysore was sequestered by Bentinck (1831) was himself a voluminous writer. He was the author of the poetical romance *Sugandhikaparinaya*. Devachandra and Chandrasagara were Jain authors who flourished in his court. Modern influences were felt only in the present century. B. M. Srikantayya rendered many of the lyrics in the *Golden Treasury* into Kannada (*English Gitegalu*) and wrote the dramas *Asvathama* and *Gadayuddha*. Masti

Venkatesa Aiyangar is the master of modern Kannada. He wrote songs, poems, short stories and one-act plays. D. R. Bendre wrote poems in which the classical and the spoken idioms were happily blended.

Malayalam literature was long dominated by the *Kathakali* drama, whose verses are of considerable literary merit. Successive rulers of Travancore patronised the *Kathakali* composers, Ravi Varman Tampi (1782-1863) being one of the most outstanding. His chief works were *Daksha Yaga*, *Kichaka Vadha* and *Uttarasvayamvara*. The new influences were felt from the middle of the nineteenth century. Gundert of the Mangalore Mission wrote a Malayalam grammar in 1868 and a Malayalam-English Dictionary in 1872. A uniform prose, without local variations, developed in due course. Traditional themes and Sanskrit metres characterised the early literature. The *Mahabharata* of Kunhukuttan Tampuram, the *Ramayana* of Vallattol Narayana Menon (b. 1878), and *Pandavodaya* of Kochunni Tampuran (1885-1926) were the important epics. Kerala Varma translated the *Sakuntala* and wrote a poem *Mayura Sandesam* in imitation of the *Meghaduta*. Poet Vallattol also wrote several short poems with a wide popular appeal. K. M. Panikkar, K. Padmanabha Pillai and Krishnan Tampi among others wrote dramas, prose works and novels dealing with historical and social themes.

CHAPTER 12

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CULTURE

The influences of Indian culture on different parts of the world is a fascinating study recently undertaken by scholars and much progress has been made in the scientific study of the subject so far as Asia and the Far East are concerned. Just as Greek culture spread through the Mediterranean world in the ancient times in the wake of peaceful commerce and colonisation the culture of ancient India too spread far and wide as a result of prolonged commercial contacts and missionary enterprise. Both Buddhism and Brahmanical Hinduism spread in many parts of the eastern world roughly between 100 and 1500 A.D. Roughly speaking Buddhism went to this area from North India and Hinduism from South India. The spread of Buddhism in the ancient period in Central Asia, Ceylon, Burma, China, Korea, Japan, Malaya, Indo-China and Indonesia was striking, but it will be easily conceded that the effects of Hindu culture, of the study of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita *e.g.*, were more abiding, particularly on western thought and philosophy. The contacts with the western world in the ancient period were practically limited to the near west but the inclusion of north-west India in the Arab empire in the 8th century helped the dispersal of Hindu knowledge in Europe. The essence of Hindu philosophy and religion has been conveyed to the western world by such eminent men as Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi.

SECTION I

The Spread of Buddhism in Central Asia, Burma, China, Korea, Japan and Ceylon

Central Asia : Tibet

From the days of Asoka Buddhist missionaries had travelled and settled in the different parts of Central Asia

with the sole object of founding monasteries and spreading Buddhist learning. The area exposed to Buddhist influence extended from Eastern Turkestan upto China. The chief centres of Buddhist influence in this wide area were Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan, Kuchi, and Shan Shan. Buddhist relics in these places—monasteries, stupas, painted caves, inscriptions, manuscripts, etc—were unearthed by British, French, German, Russian and Japanese explorers in the beginning of this century. The Gomativihara of Khotan was a celebrated Buddhist University. Fa-Hien, who stayed in this university has recorded that it housed 3,000 monks. Kumarajiva was the Rajaguru of the king of Kuchi. As a result of a Chinese invasion he was carried away to China as a prisoner (383). The Chinese gave him the work of translating several works in Sanskrit into Chinese. At first he studied the Vedas and the Upanishads in Kashmir. Later he became a Mahayana Buddhist and migrated to Kuchi. In China he did splendid work as a translator.

Influenced by his Nepalese and Chinese queens King Sron Tsan Gampo of Tibet introduced Buddhism into his country in the seventh century. The Tibetan Buddhist religion of Lamaism was established in the eighth century under the influence of Padmasambhava, a Mahayana Buddhist from the Nalanda University, who is still worshipped as the second Buddha. In the ninth century the Tibetan kings employed a number of Indian and Tibetan scholars to translate the Buddhist works from Sanskrit into Tibetan. In the eleventh century Atisa, the President of the Vikramasila University, went to Tibet by special invitation to reform Lamaism.

Burma, China, Korea, Japan, and Ceylon.

Buddhism began to enter Burma in the first century A.D. by the overland route from North India and was well

established in several centres by the fifth century, notably Prome and Thaton. In the latter century Thaton was visited by Buddhaghosha. Pagan, a great Buddhist centre, was established in the ninth century. Hundreds of Buddhist temples were built all over Burma.

Buddhist influence in China began in the fourth century, with the work of Kumarajiva of Kuchi, who translated into Chinese about fifty Buddhist Sanskrit works. He worked in an official capacity and his followers, numbering 3000, carried the message of Buddhism far and wide. Buddhist paintings and iconography began to develop in the fifth century. Buddhist influence was so marked that Emperor Wu-Ti (502-49), called the Asoka of China, became a Buddhist monk and issued an edict prohibiting animal slaughter. From China Buddhism entered Korea in the fourth century and was welcomed by its rulers. By 550 an order of monks and nuns had come into existence. Buddhism passed on from Korea into Japan and won rapid recognition from the masses. The old gods became Bodhisattvas. Emperor Shotoku (539-622) made Buddhism the state religion and employed Korean monks to teach Buddhism to his subjects. In the eighth century Buddhism had spread throughout the country.

Devanampiya Tissa, (247-207 B.C.). mentioned in the Asokan edicts, is the first historical ruler of Ceylon. The mission of Asoka consisting of his son and daughter converted him to Buddhism, and ever since Ceylon has remained predominantly Buddhist. At Anuradhapura, his capital, Devanampiya Tissa planted a branch of the Bodhi tree and erected a Buddhist monastery. Mahasena (fourth century A.D.) built several *stupas* and *viharas*. His son Meghavarna received the tooth relic of Buddha from Kalinga. His successor Buddhadasa made elaborate arrangements for providing medical facilities in the villages. In the fifth cen-

tury Ceylon was visited by Fa-Hien and Buddhaghosa. The Chola intervention, conquest and annexation of North Ceylon in the eleventh century saw the erection of numerous Saiva and Vaishnava temples and a set-back to Buddhism. In the reign of Chola Kulothunga I Ceylon became independent. Parakramabahu I (1153-86) was a great ruler of Ceylon. He waged successful wars, erected many palaces and public works like tanks and canals, purified Buddhism and built many *stupas* and *viharas*.

SECTION II

Spread of Buddhism and Hinduism in the East

Kingdom of Srivijaya : the Sailendra Empire : Borobudur.

Srivijaya was a small kingdom in Sumatra (Suvarnadvipa). By 700 it became a big maritime empire and included Malaya and Java. The empire seems to have passed through a chequered career for nearly five centuries. Though its history has not yet been fully worked out the dominance of Buddhism in its heyday is well established. The greatest monument of the empire is Borobudur in Central Java and belongs to the ninth century, when Java was a part of the empire. This is a hill carved in nine stages, giving the stories of the birth of Buddha in a series of reliefs in stone. There are about 2000 reliefs in all and numerous images of Buddha. "As the pilgrim ascends the monument, he gets the impression of a spiritual ascent; the lower parts are rich in decoration, whereas the upper portions are plain and unadorned, indicative of the Great Nothingness of Buddhist philosophy."

Hinduism in Java, Bali, Borneo, Malaya, Siam, Cambodia, and Champa.

Java (Yavadvipa) was first colonised by the Hindus and the dominance of Brahminism from the second to the

seventh centuries is evident from the Chinese records and local inscriptions in Sanskrit. Fa-Hien, who stayed in Java on his way back to China (414) has testified to the insignificance of Buddhism there. From 778 to 879 it was included in the Sailendra empire and this period witnessed the erection of the Buddhist monuments at Borobudur, Kalasan and other places in Central Java. In 879 Java became independent once more and the old Hindu ruling dynasties were restored. The Saiva Sanjaya dynasty ruled over Central Java from 879 to 927 and this period witnessed the building of the great Hindu temples of Prambanan (near Borobudur). Here there are eight temples dedicated to Vishnu and Siva. The sculptures in this group of temples are as numerous and variegated as those in Borobudur, and depict scenes from the *Ramayana*. Kadiri, in eastern Java, was the headquarters of a Hindu kingdom, which flourished in the twelfth century. One of its kings was Jayavarsha, who patronised Triguna, the author of *Krishnayana*, dealing with the abduction of Rukmini by Krishna. Other Sanskrit works of the period are *Smaradahana* and *Bharatayuddha*.

Bali, a small island to the east of Java, was ruled by independent Hindu dynasties till the close of the tenth century, when it passed under Java. It regained its independence in the thirteenth century. The Balinese refused to submit to the Islamic influences and to this day they observe the caste system and conduct their religious rites with the help of Brahmin priests. Borneo was a Hindu colony. In the fifth century it was ruled by one Mulavarman, well-known as a protector of cows and Brahmins. A Sanskrit inscription in Eastern Borneo records that he made a gift, on the occasion of the *bahusuvarna* ceremony, of 20,000 cows to the Brahmins.

The earliest inscriptions in Malaya are in Sanskrit. It lay on the trade route linking South India with China. When

Chola Rajendra I undertook his eastern expedition it formed part of the Sailendra empire. From the inscriptions we know that in the fourth and fifth centuries Malaya was ruled by Hindu kings, who patronised Saivism, Vaishnavism and Buddhism. That Siam was colonised by several South Indian merchants is attested by a Siamese inscription in Tamil belonging to the eighth or ninth century, which mentions a South Indian trading corporation. Hindu worship as practised in the South Indian temples was common, and even today traces remain. The older inhabitants of Siam were the Thais and after them the country is known as Thailand. The Thais established their political power only in the thirteenth century and their first king assumed the Hindu name of Indraditya.

Indo-China consisted of three Hindu kingdoms, Funan, Cambodia and Chamba. The first two were colonised by the Hindus in the first century A.D. The Hinduization was a gradual process. The traditional founder of both the kingdoms was Kaundinya, who is said to have compelled the nude amazonian native queen of Cambodia to wear clothes. The Hindus of Funan maintained a navy and carried on trade with India and China. Jayavarman, a king of Funan, sent, in the fifth century, two embassies to China. In the sixth century Funan was included in the kingdom of Cambodia. Hindu kings ruled over Cambodia (Kamboja) from 570 to 1201. Rudravarman, one of the early kings, maintained in his court two brothers, Brahmadatta and Brahmasimha, who were expert Ayurvedic physicians. Bhavavarman, who ruled over Cambodia in the beginning of the sixth century, assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraja* and patronised Saivism and Vaishnavism. He organized the recitations of the texts of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the Puranas. His successors were Mahendravarman, Isanavarman and others under whom Vedic sacrifices were

performed, Brahminical *asramas* were erected and monastic life encouraged. Towards the close of the eighth century Cambodia became a part of the Sailendra empire but it became free in the next century. Yasovarman (889-910) built and patronised Saiva and Vaishnava temples and improved and beautified the capital Yasodharapura (Ankor Thom). In the court of his successors there lived many Sanskrit scholars like Bhatta Divakara, Yōgisvara Pandita, Sivacharya, Sankara Pandita etc. The *guru* of Suryavarman (1112—52) was one Divakara Pandita, under whose guidance the great temple-city of Ankor-Vat was built. This city contains a Vishnu temple of the Dravidian type, with towers over the gateways, and many sculptures, illustrating scenes from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Harivamsa*, viz., Rama chasing Maricha, Vali-vadham, Sita's fire ordeal, Krishna's raising up the Govardhana, the churning of the ocean, the Kama-dahanam etc. Ankor-Vat is the last of the three great monuments of ancient Indian art in the Far East (the other two being Borobudur and Prambanan). In the thirteenth century the Cambodian kingdom declined consequent on the aggression of Champa and Thailand.

Champa or the eastern coastal territory of Indo-China was colonised by South Indians probably at the same time as Funan and Cambodia. The earliest Sanskrit inscription of Champa belongs to the third century. The history of the Hindu kingdom of Champa is a long one and in its cultural outlook offers a close parallel to that of Cambodia. The kings called Bhadravarman, Rudravarman, Sambhavarman, etc., patronised Saivism, Vaishnavism and Buddhism. Their capital was Indrapura. Twelve dynasties ruled Champa upto 1318. In Champa the caste system prevailed, but was tempered by inter-caste marriages. The Champa erected temples to the *linga* and Vishnu images but have not left any monument noted for creative art.

Buddhist monuments in China and Japan

As referred to above Buddhism grew rapidly in China under royal patronage and became its most important religion during the 5th, 6th and succeeding centuries. The Chinese Buddhists excavated some cave temples dedicated to the Buddha and these belong to the period 600—1200 A.D. The caves at Yunkang contain numerous Buddha images and sculptures. The latter deal with the life of the Buddha. They resemble the Indian sculptures in spirit. The largest Buddhist monuments in Japan are the temple and monastery at Horyuji. The latter contains several paintings in the Ajanta style.

SECTION III

*Indian influences on European Life and Culture**A few important economic and other gifts*

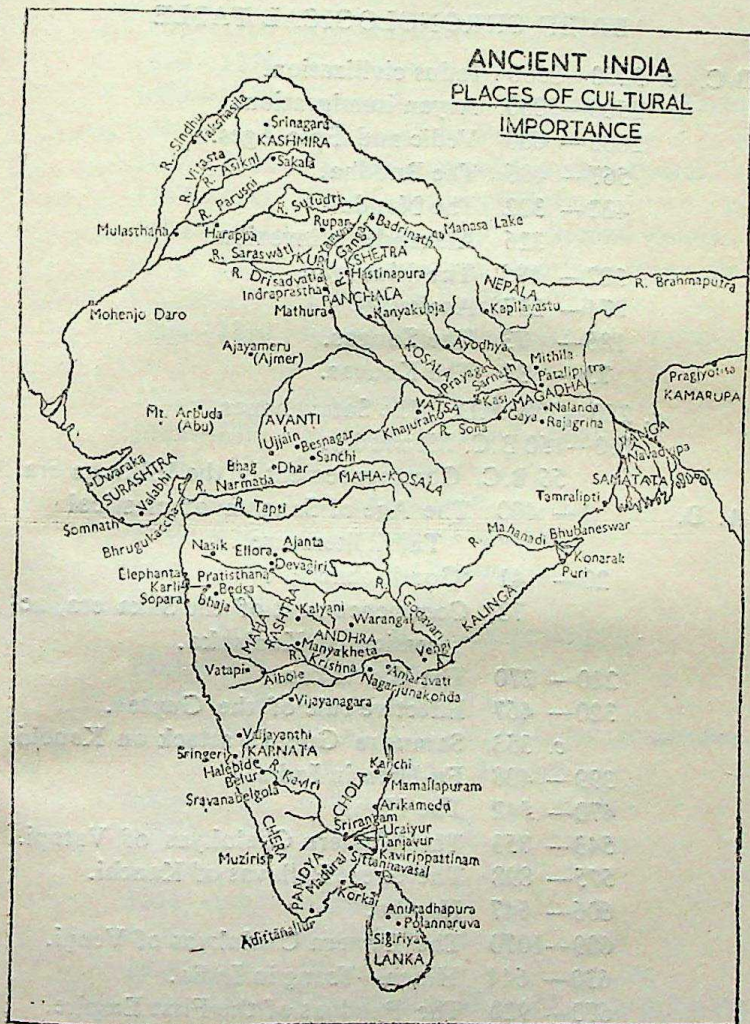
One of the important necessities of European life is spices, largely used in preparing and preserving meat, and these were regularly supplied from India. It is well known that the forced stoppage of the Mediterranean trade in spices by the Turks led to the discovery of the New World. Rice, sugarcane and cotton were taken over into Europe from India and then cultivated on a large scale in different parts of the world. Chess, the international numerals, and the decimal system are some other important Indian contributions to the Western World.

Influence on European thought

Ancient Indian culture and philosophy as contained in the Vedas and the Upanishads have greatly influenced modern European thought. The Asiatic Society's translations of the classical Sanskrit works and Anquetil Duperron's renderings of the Upanishads* opened the eyes of

* See Sec. 2, Ch. 1

the Europeans to the greatness of Indian achievements in the past. Goethe, Schopenhauer, Fichte and Hegel of Europe and Emerson, Walt Whitman and Thoreau of America are some famous scholars, of the modern age who had drunk deep of the wisdom of ancient India through translations. Some religious movements of modern India with their roots deep in the past like the Ramakrishna Mission and the Indian branches of the Theosophical Society have great friends and admirers in the western world. The most recent and perhaps the best example of the deep Indian influence on western thought is undoubtedly the great admiration which a very large number of Europeans and Americans have for the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. His methods and understanding were truly those of the ancient sages. His greatest service to modern Indians, who had forgotten their heritage, was to show them the greatness of their ancestors and their fund of knowledge. "The sages who meditated in the jungles of the Ganges valley 600 years or more before Christ are still forces in the world."



BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- B.C.** c. 3250—2500 Indus civilization.
 2500—2000 Aryan immigration.
 2000— 600 Vedic and Epic Ages.
 567— 486 The Buddha.
 422— 322 The Nandas.
 326 Alexander's invasion.
 322— 185 The Mauryas.
 274— 237 Asoka.
 185— 73 The Sungas.
 73— 31 The Kanvas.
- c. 230—220 A.D. The Satavahanas.
 160—150 B.C. Menander.
 56 B.C. Commencement of the Vikrama era.
- A. D.** 1— 400 The Age of Sangam or classical
 Tamil literature.
 20— 41 'Gondopharnes'.
 78 Commencement of the Saka era, ac-
 cession of Kanishka.
 220— 270 The Ikshvakus.
 320— 467 Effective rule of the Guptas.
 c. 353 Samudra Gupta's attack on Kanchi.
 399— 408 Fa-Hien in India.
 470— 542 The Huns.
 543— 753 The Western Chalukyas of Vatapi.
 575— 898 The Great Pallavas of Kanchi.
 606— 647 Harsha.
 609—1070 The Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi.
 630— 644 Hiuen—Tsang in India.
 670— 920 The Pandyas of the First Empire.
 712 The Arab conquest of Sindh.
 745— 973 The Rashtrakutas.
 c. 750—1200 The Palas of Bengal.

BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

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- c. 800—1200 The Rajaputs.
- 850—1279 The Cholas.
- 1000—1027 The raids of Muhammad of Ghazni.
- c. 1100—1199 The Senas of Bengal.
- 1100—1342 The Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra.
- 1187—1311 The Yadavas of Devagiri.
- 1190—1311 The Pandyas of the Second Empire.
- 1192 Muhammad of Ghor's victory over Prithviraja III at Tarain.
- 1206—1210 Kutbuddin Aibek, the first Sultan of Delhi.
- 1296—1316 Alauddin Khilji.
- 1325—1351 Muhammad-bin-Tughlak.
- 1336—1675 Vijayanagar.
- 1347—1490 The Bahmanis.
- 1351—1388 Firoz Shah Tughlak.
- 1398— 99 Timur's invasion.
- 1412—1451 The Sayyids
- 1498 Vasco da Gama at Calicut.
- 1451—1526 The Lodis.
- 1509—1529 Krishnadeva Raya.
- 1526 Babar's victory at Panipat, commencement of the Mughal rule.
- 1526— 30 Babur.
- 1530— 56 Humayun.
- 1540— 45 Sher Shah.
- 1556—1605 Akbar.
- 1605— 27 Jahangir.
- 1628— 59 Shah Jahan.
- 1641 The building of Ft. St. George by the English at Madras.
- 1658—1707 Aurangzeb.
- 1674 Coronation of Shivaji.
- 1713 Rise of the Peshwaship.

- 1724 Beginning of the independent rule of
the Nizam of Haiderabad.
- 1738— 39 Invasion of Nadir Shah.
- 1742— 54 Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry.
- 1748— 67 Invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali.
- 1757 Siraj-ud-daulah, the Nawab of Ben-
gal defeated by Clive at Plassey.
- 1761 The Mahrattas defeated at Panipat
by Ahmad Shah Abdali.
- 1772—1833 Ram Mohan Rai.
- 1772— 85 Warren Hastings, Governor-General.
- 1781 Haider defeated by the English at
Mangalore and the Mahrattas at
Gwalior.
- 1786— 93 Cornwallis, Governor-General.
- 1793 Permanent Revenue Settlement.
- 1795 Mahratta victory over the Nizam at
Khanda.
- 1798—1805 Wellesley, Governor-General.
- 1799 Tipu defeated and killed by the
English at Seringapatam.
- 1803 Wellesley's victories over the Mahrattas
at Assaye, Argoan etc.
- 1813— 23 Lord Hastings, Governor-General.
- 1817— 19 Hastings's victories over the Mahrattas
at Kirkee, Ashti etc.
- 1829 Bentinck's Resolution against *Sati*.
- 1833— 86 Ramakrishna Paramahansa.
- 1834 Macaulay's Minute on Education.
- 1835 Bentinck's decision to foster English
education.
- 1843 British annexation of Sind.
- 1845— 49 British victories over the Sikhs and
annexation of the Punjab.

BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

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- 1848— 56 Dalhousie, Governor-General.
 1853 First railway line connecting Bombay
 with Thana.
 1857— 59 The Great Indian Mutiny.
 1858—1922 Pandita Rama Bai.
 1861—1941 Rabindranath Tagore.
 1869—1948 Mahatma Gandhi.
 1875 Arya Samaj founded.
 1878— 80 British war with Afghanistan.
 1883 Ripon's Resolution of Local Self-
 Government.
 1885 Annexation of Burma, foundation of
 the Indian National Congress.
 1903— 4 Tibetan expedition.
 1909 Minto-Morley Reforms.
 1919 Mont-Ford Reforms.
 1935 Government of India Act.
 1947 Indian Independence Act passed in
 British Parliament.
 1950 Republican Constitution for India.

Appendix B

SYLLABUS

A History of Indian Culture (40 Lectures)

1. The meaning of History.
2. What is Culture?
3. The discovery of ancient India.
4. The Harappa culture and its affiliations.
5. The culture of the Vedic Aryans.
6. Political life and thought of ancient India.
Kingship—Quasi-feudalism—Oligarchies and republics—military organisation and technique.
7. Social life in ancient India :
Class—Family—the Individual—the caste system—the four stages of life.
8. Everyday life in ancient India :
Agriculture—Stock-breeding—Clothes and Ornaments—Economic life—Sea trade and Overseas contacts.
9. Religion :
The religion of the Vedas—Philosophy of the Upanishads—Buddhism—Jainism—Hinduism and its six systems of Philosophy—Later religious teachers—Early Christianity in India—Thomas, the Apostle.
10. The Arts :
Early architecture—the Stupa—Cave temples—Structural temples—Sculpture in stone and metal—the dancing Siva—Paintings at Ajanta, Bagh, Sittannavasal, Sigiriya and Tanjore—Music—Dance.
11. Language and Literature :
Sanskrit—Prakrits—Pali—Dravidian languages—Vedic literature—Epic literature—classical poetry and drama—Tamil literature.
12. Islam's impact on India—Cultural influences—Muslim architecture.
13. The impact of the West on India.
14. India's contribution to World Culture.

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178	14	add faith after	new
"	29	compassionable	compassionate
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208	17	sons	son
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212	28	Gandavaho	Gaudavaho
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The figure of Dancing Girl (Mohenjo-Daro) between pp. 8 and 9 is Bronze and not Terracotta.

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